

360°

Office Remix

Why the hottest trend in office design delivers lukewarm performance and what to do about it

Finding Focus

New Steelcase study proves visual privacy in the open plan helps people stay focused

Tech Talent Beacon

Data-driven tools put a company's culture in overdrive



Exploring Innovation at Work

Issue 17





360°

Exploring
Innovation
at Work

Have you noticed? Many of today's offices look more like a trendy café, a homey den or a playground than a place where work happens.

Whether described as “resimercial,” “ancillary” or “anti-corporate,” informal shared spaces are the latest way organizations are trying to woo talent. Yet, despite their investments, many of these spaces often sit empty.

This issue of 360 explores the trend and shares new research revealing what people really want: inspiring and productive spaces that help them get real work done. It's time for an office remix.

A 360 View

Why Some of the Coolest Spaces at Work Sit Empty

Offices around the world today look a lot more like a coffee shop or a boutique hotel than the rabbit warren of cubicles, private offices and conference rooms that people liked to poke fun at. Bringing baristas and bartenders into the workplace, along with cushy sofas, farmhouse tables and mismatched chairs is the hottest trend in workplace design. Whether you call it “resimercial,” “ancillary spaces” or “loose furnishings” the goal is the same: attract the best talent by offering a workplace with a relaxed vibe and hip sensibility. This decidedly “anti-corporate” approach to the workplace is intended to inject creativity and humanity into our culture and work process.

But there's a problem: a lot of the time they're not being used.

For all our complaining about traditional work environments, many of the coolest spaces sit empty. When presented with a range of spaces that look like stylish living rooms or whimsical play areas, our studies show that people don't choose the plush lounge chairs nearly as often as you might think (see Office Remix, pg. 22). The question is why?

The answer may be surprising to some—but people actually come to work to get stuff done. There's nothing wrong with injecting a little playfulness into work but not at the expense of being productive. People may like the coffee shop aesthetic, but they choose spaces optimized for work. Furnishings designed for watching television or curling up with a good book aren't the same as furnishings designed to support people working on laptops or collaborating with teammates. And sitting on bean bag chairs on the floor actually inhibits creativity and collaboration rather than enables it.

So does this mean the office will go back to looking like a maze of gray and beige? We don't think so. Offices can be designed to be relaxing and inspiring places to work where people can leave at the end of the day feeling a sense of accomplishment, as well as a sense of community. But this will require a fundamentally different approach to office design—one that thinks about the diverse types of spaces people need and how they get their work done—as well as how the space makes them feel.



Chris Congdon
Editor, 360 Magazine

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22 Office Remix

The demand for casual, shared environments at work is at an all-time high. At the same time, organizations are more challenged than ever to use every bit of their real estate in meaningful ways. It's often hard to know for sure what employees really need or want, and so often spaces are sitting empty. New research from Steelcase points the way with guidelines for creating casual work settings that are purposeful, productive and appealing—sure-to-be-used places for getting real work done.



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Simon Sinek's New Game

Simon Sinek's new book, "The Infinite Game," takes on everything you thought you knew about business. The author and TED speaker challenges many conventional notions long seen as foundational to business, explains the difference between the finite and infinite game and why so many leaders get it wrong.



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Getting It Right

Merging two very different cultures into one. Helping guide clients through the transformations required to meet today's rapid push for innovation. Bringing a holistic vision of employee wellbeing to life. More fully leveraging tremendous talent. From Utrecht to Madrid to a remote area in China, four case studies tell how organizations successfully created vibrant workplaces to accelerate strategic goals.



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Finding Focus

Turns out, finding the privacy you need at work doesn't necessarily require closing a door. A new Steelcase study proves that when an open plan office is designed with pockets of visual privacy, it really is possible to focus and get things done. But don't close your eyes to this additional finding: When it's time to get creative, being in an open space with open views can help.



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Tech Talent Beacon

For high-tech software company PTC in Boston, integrating Steelcase's Smart + Connected tools in their new headquarters has made it possible to leverage data and technology to support space management, wayfinding and collaboration and put their culture change in hyperdrive.

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Thinking Outside (and Inside) the Box

Almost 20 years ago, long before laptops replaced PCs, the team at Orangebox had a vision of where work was heading, and they responded with innovative, thoroughly non-traditional workplace furniture solutions. Today they've blended their portfolio with Steelcase—a natural fit of two companies speaking the same language and prioritizing people's changing needs at work.



Perspectives

Meet the people behind this issue

Mary Elaine Roush

Manager, Applications Design, Steelcase

“Most of the time, the primary driver for shared spaces is aesthetics. But organizations need to use every square foot in a meaningful way, so these spaces need to also be productive. People need more than a beautiful sofa and a coffee table. Whether it’s an informal meeting over coffee, a brainstorm session with a small group or heads-down focus work, these spaces need to be designed with performance in mind.”



Mino Vernaschi

Co-Founder and Managing Director, Orangebox

“Our products enable organizations to work in new, more collaborative ways and can help transform both the culture and efficiency of the organization. We see our job as bringing people—not furniture—together.”



Andrew Kim

Manager, Steelcase WorkSpace Futures

“People come to the office to work. Behavioral data suggests that they have a tendency to choose shared spaces that provide a certain level of performance. Two aspects that we found are important to users when choosing a shared space are some level of shielding and appropriate postural support for their work and tools.”



Caroline Kelly

Manager, Steelcase WorkSpace Futures

“We don’t need to say goodbye to the open plan or benching. We just need to equip it differently. Pockets of privacy created through shared spaces and furniture can transform existing floorplans from places of distraction to comfortable havens for employees to collaborate and focus in harmony.”



Alejandro Pocina

President, Steelcase Spain & Portugal

“The world is changing so fast. The traditional way of doing things is not working anymore. If you don’t shake things up from time to time, you’re not going to be able to keep up.”

Anh Tran

Senior Associate,
Little Diversified Architectural Consulting

“Clients today want more specificity about what kinds of environments can create the advantages they’re after—to know which furnishings in which settings seem to be more appropriate for certain types of behaviors and types of work.”



Work Day

Ideas for a better day at work



Tackling That To-Do List

Need a little kick in the pants to complete that to-do list? You're not alone. According to David Allen, author of "Getting Things Done,"the brain is built to create and problem solve, but it's a terrible filing cabinet. His tips for conquering every task:

Two-Minute Rule

Don't weigh down your mental load with minor tasks. If you can do it in two minutes, do it now.

Inbox Inventory

Every project taking up space in your brain belongs in your inbox, instead. Once a week, take inventory to priori-tize which project(s) to tackle next.

Define Done

Whether it's when you can delete a task from your inbox or from your desktop, decide what "done" means for you. Then, identify the next action you need to take to get closer to "done."

We've Got the Blues

Workplace blues? They're going around. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) recently listed burnout, a result of stress, as a "workplace phenomenon," reminding us how important wellbeing is at work.

WHO says you might be experiencing burnout syndrome if you feel energy depletion, increased negative feelings about your job or less productive at work.

The good news? There are ways to feel better:



1 Walk This Way

There's no denying our body fuels our brain. Stanford University found that walking increases our creative output by an average of 60%. So, find time during each day when you can get moving.

2 Do Not Disturb

It's impossible to be "on" all the time. Much like our phones, our minds need to recharge on a regular basis. So, find a quiet place to breakaway or pop in your headphones to give yourself a little solace.

3 Talk It Out

At its core, work is a social endeavor. We're happier when we have meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging. So, make time for face time—meet a colleague for coffee or see who wants to grab lunch.

Perk Up

We've heard about unlimited vacation and dog-friendly offices, but with 79% of employees preferring added benefits to increased pay (Glassdoor Employment Confidence Survey 2015), some companies are getting creative.

Here are some of the more unusual perks we've heard about:



REI offers Yay Days, two paid days off per year for employees to go outside and get active.



Ben & Jerry's gives workers three free pints of ice cream every day, plus the chance to name new flavors.



World Wildlife Fund has Panda Days, which give employees every other Friday off.



Spotify covers the costs for egg freezing and fertility assistance.



Airbnb gives employees \$2,000 a year to travel anywhere in the world.



Things I Love

"Umami was designed from a question about what lounge meant for the next generation. I love the inspiration behind it, how the soft curves where the arm, back and seat converge reflect fresh snow piling up against a building and make you want to touch it."

Yuka Hiyoshi
Sr. Industrial Designer,
Steelcase



Bonding with Your Boss

What's the most shocking thing economist Lord Richard Layard has learned in his years of happiness research? The time of day people enjoy least is when they're with their boss. Sound familiar? Harvard Business Review has some tips on improving your rapport:

- 1** Align on goals

Talk to your manager about their expectations and goals for you and make sure you're on the same page.
- 2** Empathize

Before you balk at unrealistic expectations, try to see things from your manager's perspective, understanding the priorities and pressures on their list.
- 3** Focus on the positive

Get over your boss's annoying habits and try to find the good in them—we all have something worth respecting.

- 4** Connect

Get to know your manager on a personal level—what's their favorite sports team? Do they enjoy travel? What music do they like?

What We're Reading

The TransHuman Code: How to Program Your Future

Carlos Moreira & David Fergusson

Co-authors Moreira and Fergusson ask, "Are we building a better future for humanity with the help of magnificent technology or are we instead building a better future of better technology at the expense of humanity?" The TransHuman Code tries to center humanity in the emerging tension between a human-controlled or a machine-controlled world.

The Infinite Game

Simon Sinek

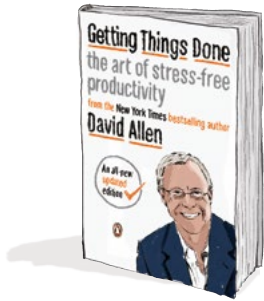
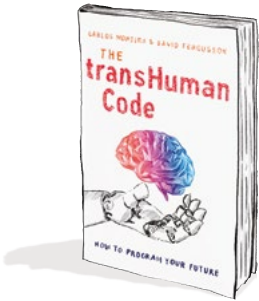
Do you know how to play the game you're in? In infinite games, like business or politics, the rules are changeable and there is no defined endpoint. There are no winners or losers in an infinite game; there is only ahead and behind. Sinek explores the struggles that organizations and leaders face when they play the infinite game with a finite mindset and why understanding this is a prerequisite for any leader who aspires to improve their organization.

Getting Things Done

David Allen

In today's world, yesterday's methods just don't work. Veteran coach and management consultant Allen shares breakthrough methods for stress-free performance. Allen's premise is simple: Our productivity is directly proportional to our ability to relax. Only when our minds are clear and our thoughts are organized can we achieve effective productivity and unleash our creative potential.

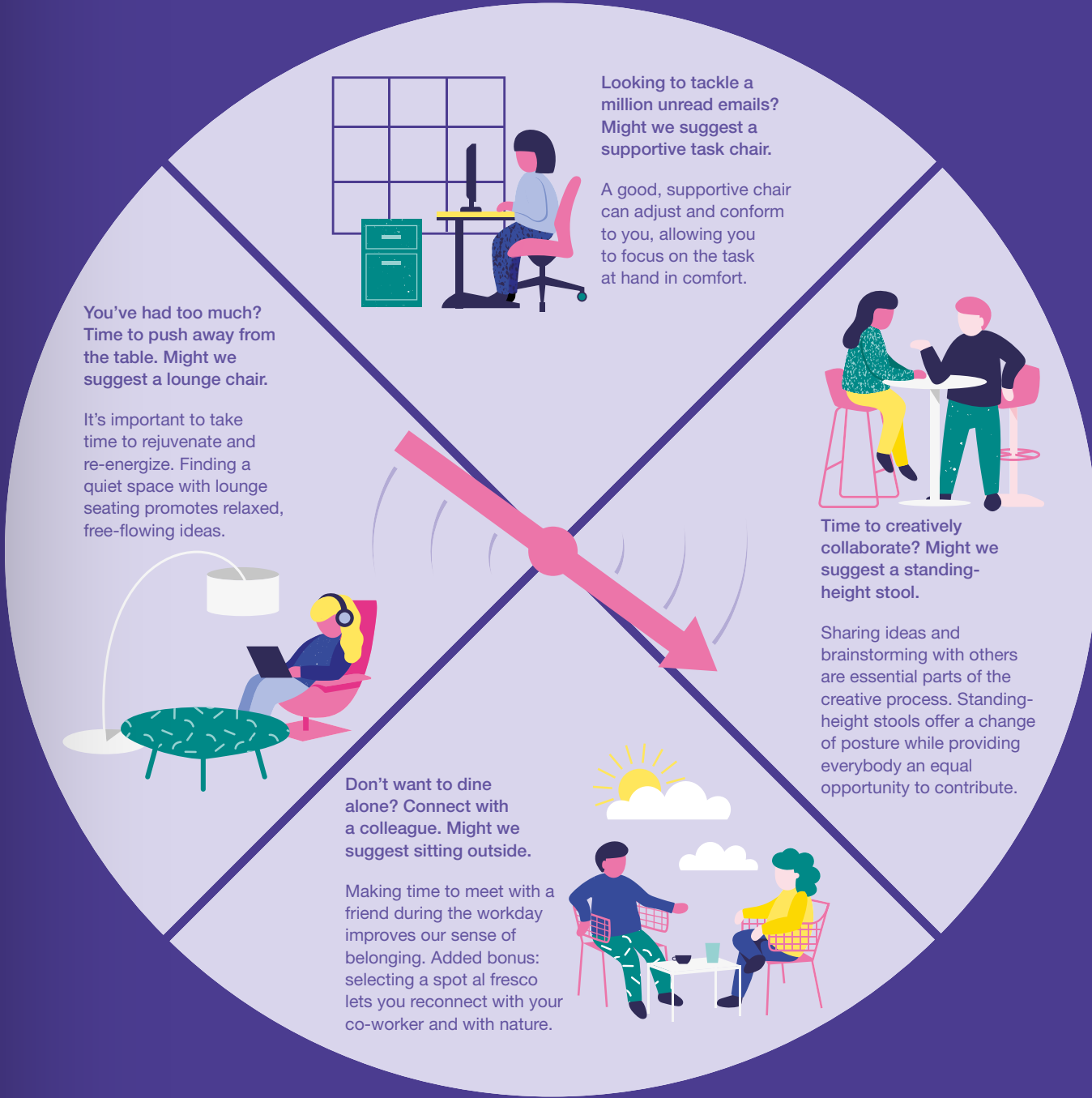
Want more from these authors? Don't miss our What Workers Want podcast episodes featuring Simon Sinek and David Allen.



Have a Seat

There's no doubt your day is busy—there's a lot on your plate. And, as you connect, focus or just take a breather, make sure to pick the right place to support your body and

refuel your brain. So, if variety is the spice of life, make sure you've given your seating menu some careful consideration.



Trends 360

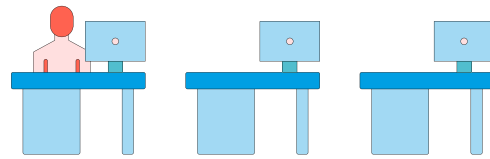
Going Beyond Average With Inclusive Design

Designing workplaces for “the average person” used to be philosophy aimed at satisfying most of the people, most of the time. But that also excluded a lot of people who didn’t fit the average. People at work expect—and deserve—diverse options that allow them to have the same opportunities as everyone else. The emerging field of inclusive design offers strategies for everyone at work to achieve their potential.

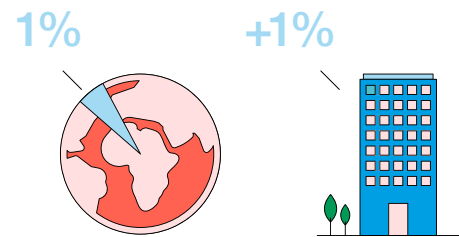
Sources: (1) Autism Works: A Guide to Successful Employment Across the Entire Spectrum,” Adam Feinstein (2) Harvard Business Review (3) jpmorganchase.com (4) Employee Health, Wellbeing and Benefits Barometer 2019 (5) An Architecture for Autism, Magda Mostafa, Ph.D. (6) Westward Newsletter (7) <http://trehauscowork.com> (8) The Jewish Forward, South Florida Sun Sentinel (9) Coworking Resources (10) Fast Company (11) The New York Times (12) <http://popnrest.com> (13) Nikkei Asian Review

Autism at Work

A growing number of prominent companies—SAP, Hewlett Packard Enterprises, Microsoft, Ford, Deloitte and Caterpillar, to name just a few—have programs or pilots underway to hire and accommodate people with autism. These companies recognize that people on the autism spectrum often have special skills and perspectives that represent untapped possibilities for both organizations and people on the spectrum.

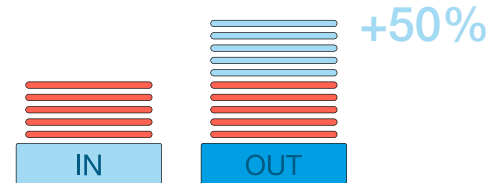


The European Union estimates a **shortage of 800,000 IT workers by 2020**, specifically in fields including data analytics and IT services implementation—jobs with tasks that fit well with the unique abilities of some neurodiverse people, which includes those with autism, dyspraxia, dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).¹

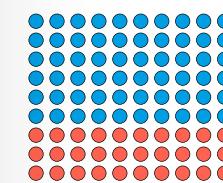


German software company SAP has announced an intention to make 1% of its workforce neurodiverse by 2020—a number representative of the approximate percentage of people with autism globally.²

Within six months, workers with autism in the JPMorgan Mortgage Banking Technology division were doing the equivalent work of people with three years’ experience—and were even **50 percent** more productive.³



Employing people with autism calls for some often-minor adjustments to the work environment. And yet, many companies don’t recognize the need or what steps to take.

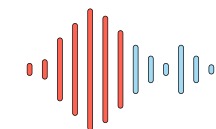


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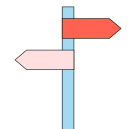
of 2,000 United Kingdom workers surveyed said their employer did not offer any additional support for those in the workforce with neurodevelopmental disorders.⁴

The Autism ASPECTSS™ Design Index is the world’s first evidence-based set of autism-specific design guidelines. Among its suggestions for creating autism-friendly spaces are noise reduction, clearly defined zones, logical spatial sequencing and wayfinding, and customizable spaces for respite.⁵

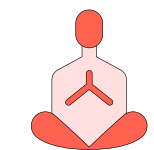
Architecture for Autism



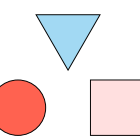
Reduce Noise



Enhance Wayfinding



Customize Respite

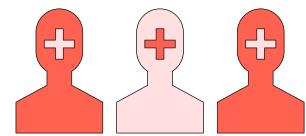


Define Zones

Finding Community in Coworking

The number of coworking spaces worldwide is projected to reach 25,968 by 2022, an increase of 42%, according to the Coworking Resources GlobalCoworking Growth Study 2019. The coworking business model is about office space as a service, but the appeal is also about social interactions, especially for mobile workers and people who are part of today's growing gig economy.

While many coworking facilities are designed to be one-size-fits-all, a growing number now cater to specific groups who are looking for a close-knit work culture and who have needs that typical spaces don't address.



25 000

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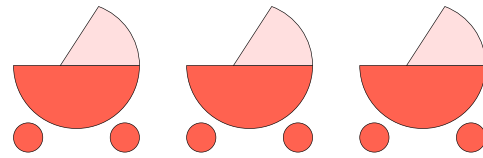
42%

increase, according to the Coworking Resources Global Coworking Growth Study 2019.



“The coworking spaces I visited felt overly masculine and didn’t exactly provide the tools and connections that I, as a woman, needed to be a successful entrepreneur.”

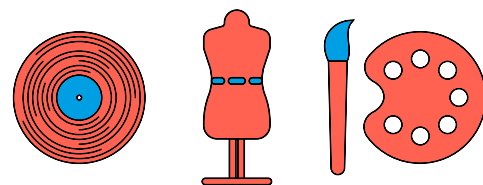
Women-only coworking clubs are popping up in cities throughout the world. “The coworking spaces I visited felt overly masculine and didn’t exactly provide the tools and connections that I, as a woman, needed to be a successful entrepreneur,” says the founder of one in Denver.⁶



Trehaus, the brainchild of four working mothers, is the first in Singapore to offer childminding facilities within a coworking environment. In addition to hot desking and dedicated workstations for working parents, Trehaus offers children the chance to explore various activities in a play space. Kids aged 2-3 years can join Trehaus Playschool, which runs a range of learning activities in English and Mandarin.⁷

“Just being Jewish and working with other Jewish people, there’s a sense of community.”

Jewish coworking spaces are newsmakers in several U.S. cities as well as Melbourne, Australia. “Just being Jewish and working with other Jewish people, there’s a sense of community and already connection,” says the member of one in Chicago. “It’s more kibbutzy,” is how its founder describes the relationship.⁸



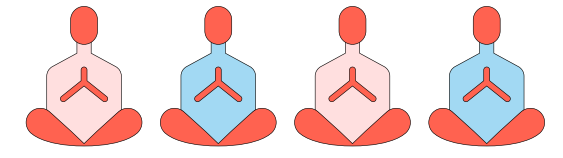
In London, Arebyte provides coworking space for artists and creatives, with a range of studios to appeal to animators, fashion designers, DJs, musicians, digital media artists, fine artists and more.⁹

Six U.S. cities now offer coworking spaces just for seniors, a generation that’s living and working longer than ever. Here it’s all about feeling at ease, learning and being productive. “It’s a subtle thing, but when you’re 75 years old and you walk into a space, it should feel comfortable there,” says one New York City member.¹⁰

Waking Up to the Need for Rest

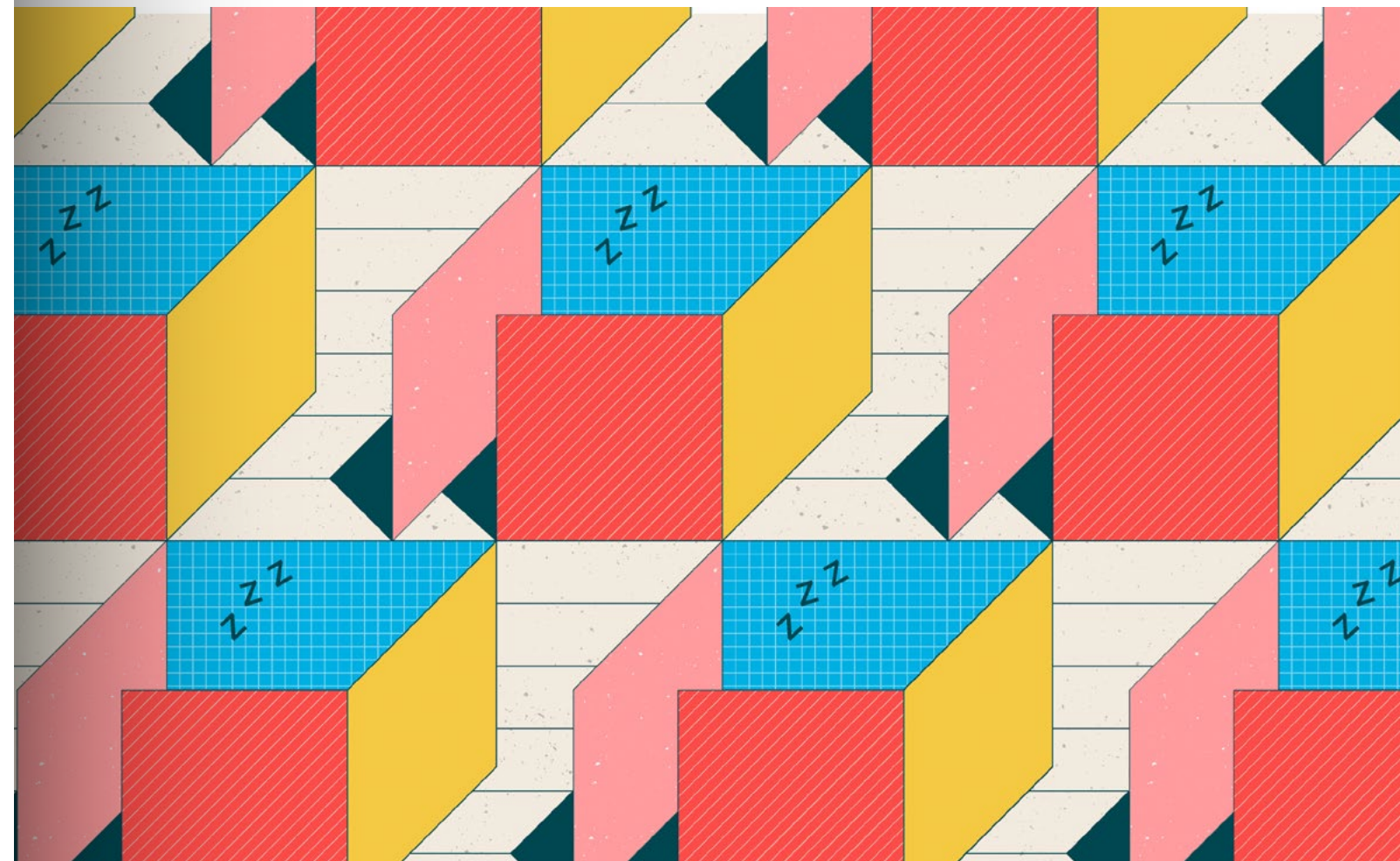
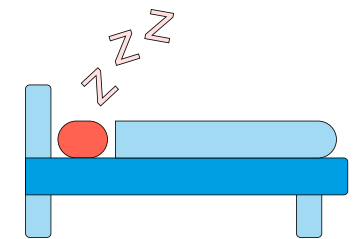
While some people still have a traditional 9-5 work schedule and get a solid eight hours of sleep at night, the rise of a less predictable and more blended work-life schedule has led people to look for moments of rest outside the conventional time and place. Studies also show that a brief nap helps our brains think more clearly. Some offices have started incorporating places for rest and rejuvenation, but some people hesitate to use them, fearing perceptions of slacking. Recognizing the need, new urban enterprises offer experiences that make it as easy to go out for a nap as it is to go out for lunch.

In New York, the city may never sleep, but you can just by dropping into any number of co-sleeping businesses that offer private power naps, such as The Dreamery, a service from Casper, which also sells its mattresses and other sleep aids right around the corner. “Rather than viewing sleep as ‘lost time’ away from work and socializing, we are beginning to recognize that prioritizing sleep is necessary to achieve optimal productivity and wellbeing,” notes a scholar for The National Sleep Foundation.¹¹



In London, Pop & Rest (P&R) is a startup that provides private and peaceful spaces to recharge. While there, you can take a power nap, do breathing and meditation exercises, have a therapy session, work peacefully on a comfy mattress, or just relax.¹²

Nestle Japan has opened a nap cafe in Tokyo where customers can have a cup of coffee and doze for 30 minutes, then wake up feeling refreshed as the caffeine kicks in.¹³



Q&A

Simon Sinek's New Game

Photo by
John Doe

You may know Simon Sinek from his TED Talk—the third most popular of all time. Or you may know him from his best-selling books “Start with Why” and “Leaders Eat Last.” He’s built a career out of helping people find their *why*. Now, Sinek is going beyond *why* to help organizations navigate the future. His newest book “The Infinite Game” challenges many conventional notions considered foundational to business. He spoke to 360 Editor Chris Congdon to explain the difference between the finite and infinite game and why so many leaders get it wrong.

360: What took you down this path of exploring an infinite game?

Simon Sinek: The original articulation of a finite and an infinite game was introduced by a theologian named James Carse in the 1980s. He proposed that if you have at least one competitor, you have a game and there are two types of games—finite and infinite.

The finite game is composed of known players, fixed rules, and an agreed upon objective like baseball or soccer. We play by the rules, at the end we declare a winner and the game is over. There's a beginning, middle and end. An infinite game is defined as known and

unknown players. The rules are changeable, and the objective is to stay in the game as long as possible.

360: So, you can't win an infinite game?

SS: Exactly. When I learned about this, I realized how many infinite games we are always players within. There's no such thing as winning in marriage or friendship or global politics. There's definitely no such thing as winning in business. The players come and go. You might go bankrupt, a new company may be formed, but the game continues without you.

It occurred to me that the vast majority of leaders don't actually know the game they're in. They talk

about being number one, being the best and beating their competition. All of which are impossible. What I learned is that if you play with a finite mindset in an infinite game, there are few very consistent and predictable outcomes including the decline of trust, the decline of cooperation and the decline of innovation.

360: Having a competitor can be pretty motivating. What's wrong with wanting to beat the competition?

SS: The word competitor sets up the wrong dynamic. The idea of competition is to win. The problem is, the metrics we choose and the timeframes we choose are arbitrary. You can choose any metric you want and claim you are the winner. But, when we become too fixated on beating our competition, sometimes we make reactionary decisions.

It doesn't actually advance innovation because we're looking to react to what they're doing rather than advance a cause or something bigger than ourselves. If you are number one, then it puts you in an entirely defensive posture where you're now trying to protect your position, which definitely hurts innovation.

A healthier way to think about competition in the infinite game is to think of worthy rivalries. Another organization or player that is in the game and is worthy of comparison. That player is as good or better than you at

“There are a few very predictable outcomes when you play with a finite mindset, including the decline of trust, cooperation and innovation.”

some or many of the things you do, so they become a benchmark. You absolutely do push yourself to improve, but the only true competitor in an infinite game is yourself.

360: You talk in your book about needing a “just cause.” What do you mean by that?

SS: A just cause is a vision of the future, so far into the future, so idealized we will never actually get there, but we will die trying. A just cause is what gives our life and our work meaning. Organizations sometimes call it a vision or mission or brand. Who cares what we call it?

360: In business, it's common to hear that the reason a company exists is to return value to our shareholders—our investors. As an adult, I see the benefits to investing. Why is that not a just cause?

SS: Money is not a cause. Money is a result. That definition is largely based on the work of Milton Friedman, the Nobel Prize winning economist, who in the 1970s theorized the purpose of business is to maximize profits within the bounds of the law. This notion of shareholder supremacy was fully embraced in the 80s and 90s. The problem is, it takes a very simplistic view of business that money is the only thing that matters. Business is more dynamic than that. There are human beings involved. What about ethics? Ethics is a much higher standard than the law.

Having a just cause, a reason that's bigger than making money, is actually a good way to run a business. Companies that do these things actually outperform the other companies over time.

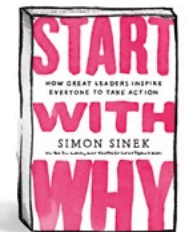
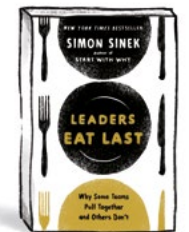
360: We're seeing a macro shift to a fast-paced style of teamwork to help companies innovate and grow. That takes a lot of trust. What are conditions organizations can embrace to build more trust?

SS: You know you have trusting teams when people feel psychologically safe enough to say, “I made a mistake,” or, “I'm struggling at home and

it's affecting my work,” or, “You've promoted me to a position, and I don't know what I'm doing. I need more training,” without any fear of humiliation or retribution. If a leader is not committed to creating an environment for trusting teams, you have a group of people who are showing up to work every single day—lying, hiding and faking. They're hiding mistakes, pretending they know how to do things they don't. And over the course of time, things will break.

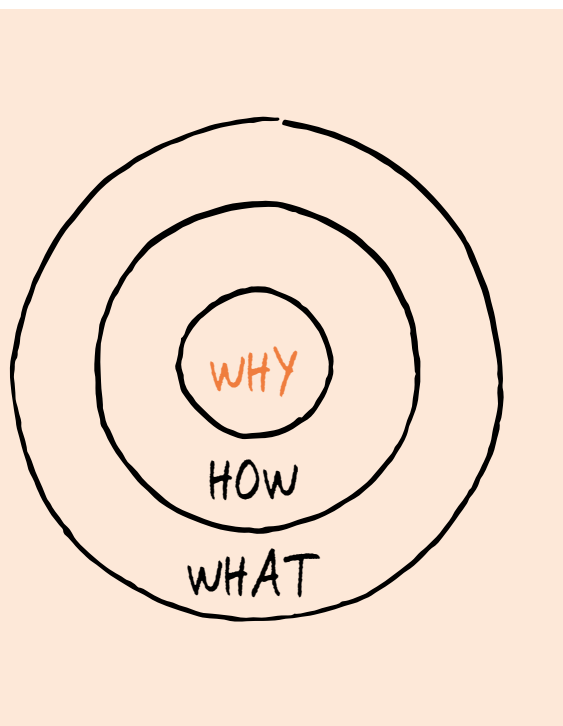
At the end of the day, we are social animals and we need each other. We're better together. In those conditions, that environment must be set by the leader. It's much like having children. You don't get to choose your children. And sometimes you don't get to choose your team. And regardless of who your children are, and who your team is, you have to trust them, and love them. It drives me nuts when leaders say, “You have to earn my trust.” No, it's the complete opposite. People are not required to trust you, you are required to trust them. And you (leader) must earn their trust. When we work to create an environment in which people feel psychologically safe to be themselves, the result is teamwork so powerful, so compelling, we literally love our teammates.

“Having a just cause, a reason that's bigger than making money, is actually a good way to run a business.”



Hear our conversation with the author by visiting our What Workers Want podcast archives at steelcase.com/podcasts.

Sinek's Golden Circle model challenges organizations to allow their purpose or “why” to ultimately guide what they do and how they do it.



Office Remix

Definition:

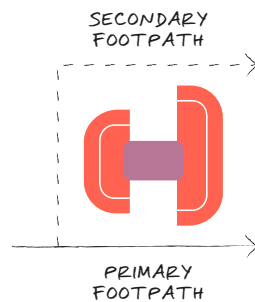
It's all about choosing the right things and combining them in new ways to create beautiful, harder working spaces with a fresh twist.

Why the Hottest Trend in Office Design Delivers Lukewarm Performance and What to Do About It

Walk into many offices today and you might think you're in a trendy cafe or boutique hotel. To attract the best and the brightest many companies are creating an "anti-office"—a more relaxed and energetic environment that contrasts with the more formidable and conventional approaches organizations favored in the past. To capture the vibe created by Silicon Valley and high-tech startups, some have strayed into gimmicky touches like merry-go-rounds and slides that feel more like a playground than a workplace. And the furnishings, right out of the pages of design magazines, that would look great in your living room are everywhere—not just in the lobby.

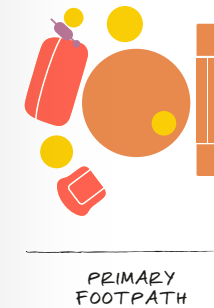
These casual shared spaces—referred to in a variety of ways (resimercial, ancillary, lounge settings, informal spaces, loose furnishings)—have become popular and important places to get work done. Steelcase's Global Study of Informal Workspaces confirms the need to remix the office—the data shows employees prefer to work in a range of spaces, rather than a single setting. And, as organizations become more matrixed and people are more mobile, organizations have responded by reducing the floor space dedicated to individual workstations and replaced them with a range of spaces: cafés, informal meeting areas, lounge spaces, private enclaves, meeting rooms and social spaces.

Yet, despite significant investments to create inspiring workplaces that will attract talent, especially the highly-sought-after Millennials, many of these more casual and fun workspaces sit empty, while others are in constant use. The question is why? Why do people choose one space over another? Is there a right formula for creating these spaces? Given the time and investment it takes, how can organizations get it right the first time?



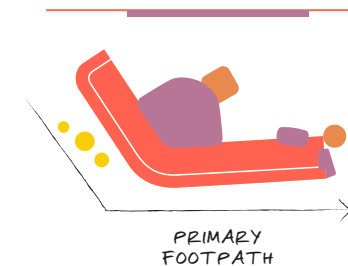
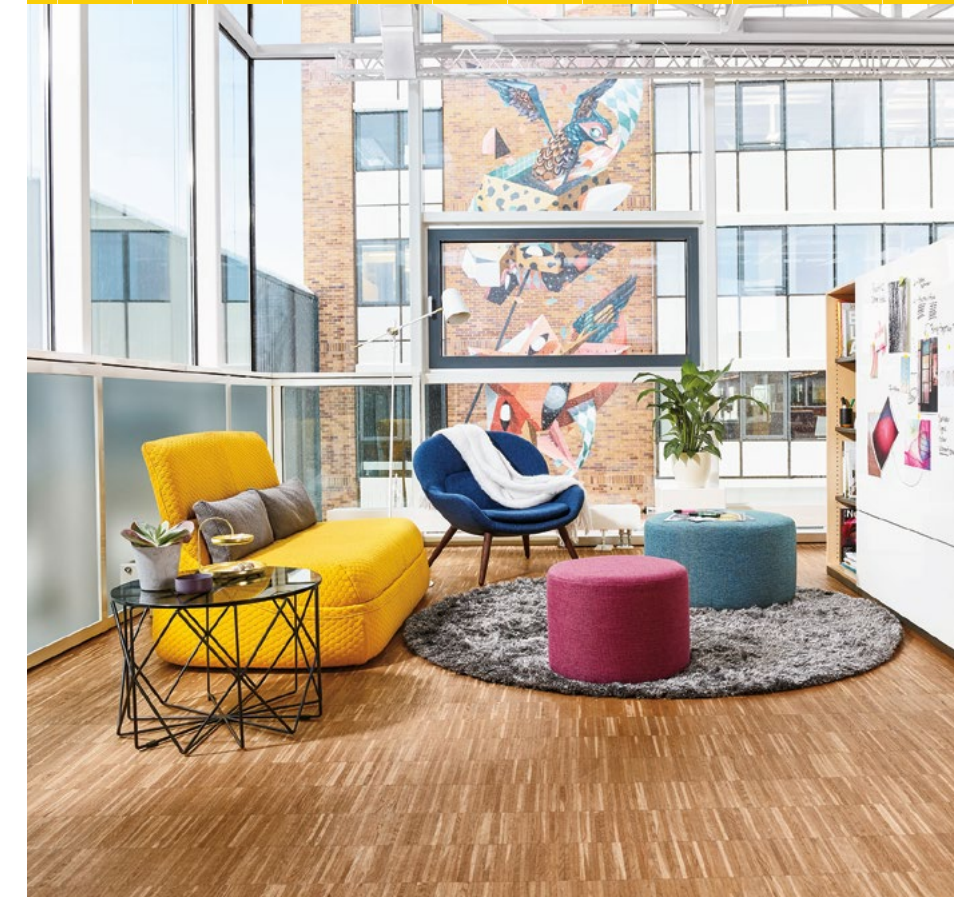
The orientation and high back of Orangebox Cwtch cocoons users from foot traffic on the main corridor to minimize distractions.

Orangebox Cwtch



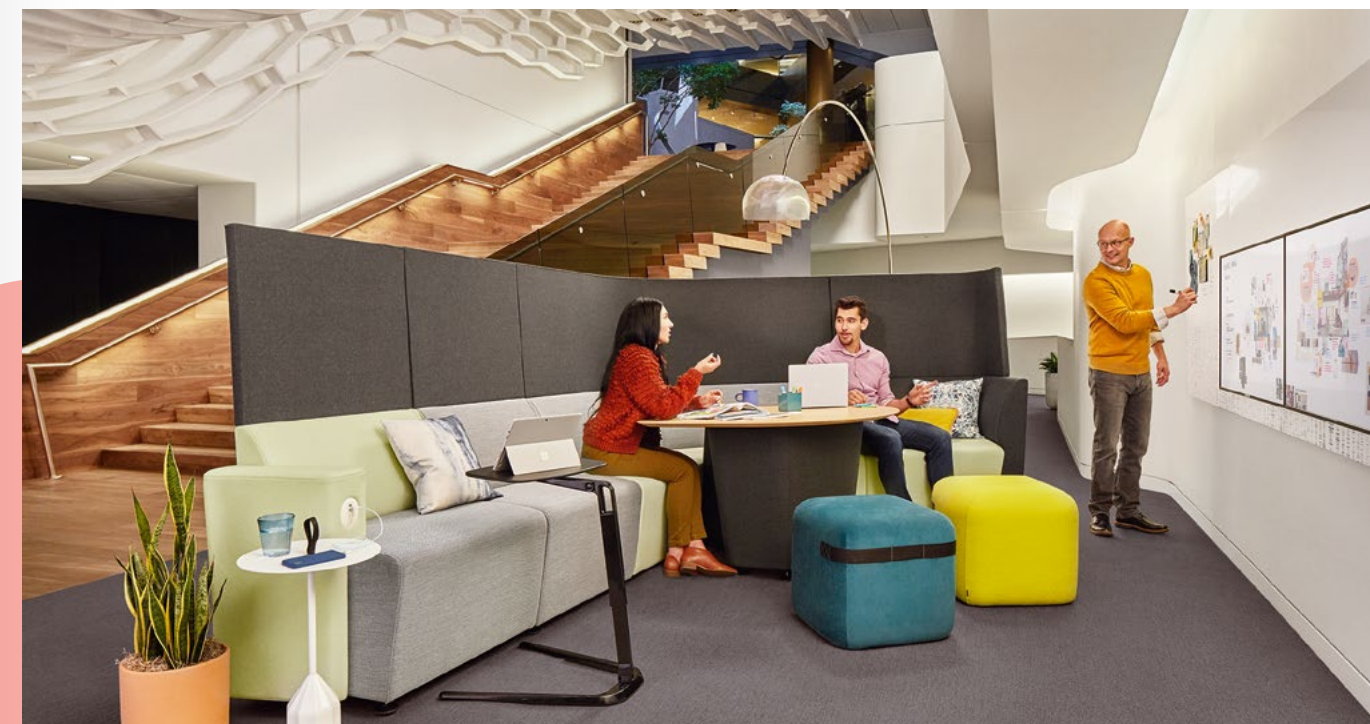
This casual setting provides a space where people can have shielded conversations, as well as an analog surface to generate content. Natural light creates an inspiring vibe.

Share It Collection
Coalesse Hosu Lounge
Bolia Philippa Armchair



Strategic positioning and the use of high-back panels on Orangebox Away from the Desk provides shielding for both content and conversations while collaboration happens along a busy corridor.

Orangebox Away from the Desk
Coalesse Free Stand
Vicarbe Burin Mini Table
PolyVision Sans Whiteboards
Vicarbe Season Mini



Form Meets Function

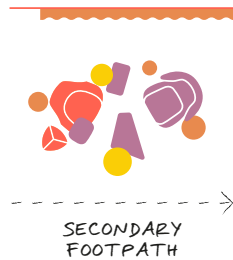
“Most of the time, the primary driver for shared spaces is aesthetics,” says Steelcase Applications Design Manager Mary Elaine Roush. “But organizations need to use every square foot in a meaningful way, so these spaces need to also be productive. People need more than a beautiful sofa and a coffee table.”

The key, according to Roush, is providing people with a mix of diverse spaces that support different work modes and styles. “Whether it’s an informal meeting over coffee, a brainstorm session with a small group or individual or heads-down focus work, these spaces need to be designed with performance in mind,” says Roush.

This may be why employees of large corporations are only moderately satisfied with the shared spaces their organizations provide them. “When we conducted experiments to learn more about the types of spaces people actually wanted, we discovered

they may like the aesthetics and the coffee shop vibe, but they’ll only use spaces that are functional and help them get their work done,” says Roush.

Verda Alexander, co-founder, Studio O+A, San Francisco, agrees. According to Alexander, organizations spend a lot of their energy and focus on trying to make the workplace more comfortable and fun by adding ping pong tables, gyms, yoga rooms and meditation rooms. These amenities can help build culture and promote rejuvenation, but we also need spaces to get work done, says Alexander. Organizations need to turn their focus toward “reducing what’s unnecessary and getting back to a focus on work,” she says.

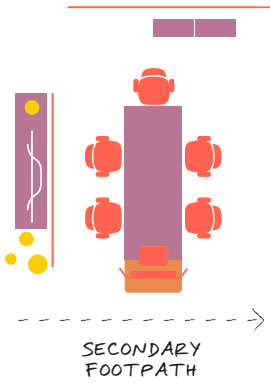


This informal lounge setting is designed to support one-on-one conversations. The seating allows for eye-to-eye contact. Power and lighting options give people user control and the small tables provide a place for drinks. Biophilic elements bring the outdoors in and create a relaxing environment.

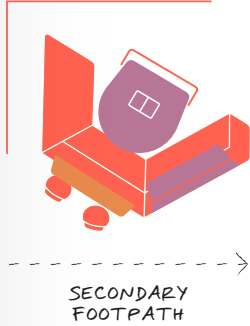
Coalesse SW_1 Lounge
Orangebox Avi Chair
Vicarbe Up In The Air Table



media:scape mobile
Vicarbe Trestle Table
SILQ Seating



This space is positioned away from the main corridor to minimize disruptions while people collaborate. Different elements are used to promote separation and provide shielding between adjacent spaces: The orientation of media:scape mobile shields people and their content while a glass partition gives people analog capability and privacy from adjacent settings.



Shielding on the media:scape unit protects users from outside distractions as well as keeps their content private. Access to power and ease of content sharing promotes collaboration.

media:scape table
media:scape lounge



What's Driving Performance?

The demands on the workplace have never been greater. As people spend more time working in teams it's taking them longer to find a place to meet, putting a strain on meeting rooms. The result is a higher requirement for all spaces to support collaboration "on demand." The problem is that they need access to spaces that support diverse activities but many shared spaces are designed primarily for social interactions and provide limited performance. Unable to find the right space for doing heads down work, it's not unusual, for example, to find people doing focus work in large spaces designed for collaboration or trying to collaborate in areas designed for respite.

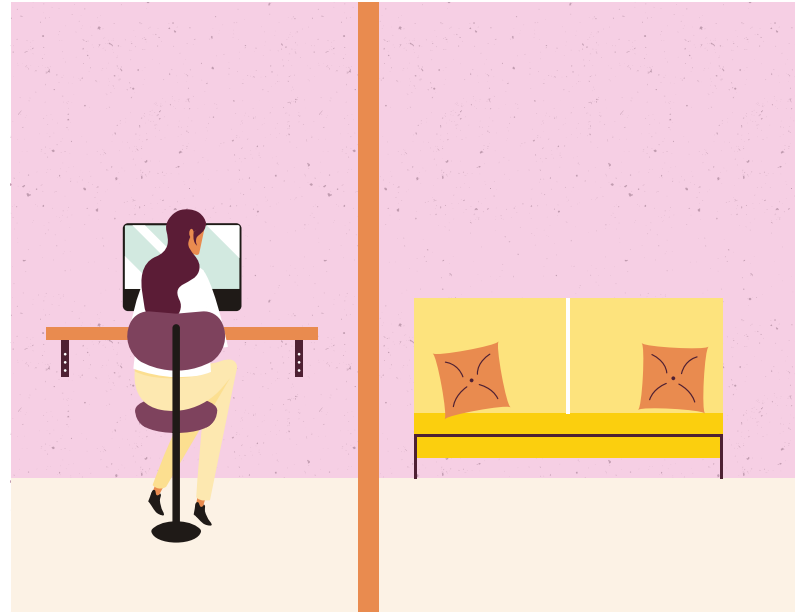
"People come to the office to work," says Andrew Kim, WorkSpace Futures manager. "Behavioral data suggests that they have a tendency to choose shared spaces that provide a certain level of performance. Two aspects that we found are important to users when choosing a shared space are some level of shielding and appropriate postural support for their work and tools. Survey data confirms these learnings as well."

To better understand the spatial attributes that drive occupancy and use, Steelcase researchers and designers conducted 23 experiments in multiple facilities. The experiments compared usage of side-by-side spaces that were identical, except for one attribute.

"These experiments confirm we have to start applying the same level of scrutiny to the details in these spaces as we do when we design workstations for individual work," says Roush. "What work mode is the space intended to support and what amenities support that work? Does it provide enough worksurface space, does it give people equal access to power, is the seating height compatible with the worksurface height? This is what will elevate or activate the performance in these spaces. Despite where the work happens, the needs don't change. So why would you design spaces away from the desk without considering those needs?" she asks.

Experiment #1

People had the choice of two enclaves: one outfitted with a desk and task chair and the other with a lounge chair. The desk setting was chosen far more than the lounge setting by a ratio of almost 2:1. The experiment also revealed that the lounge setting was chosen more by people younger than 35.



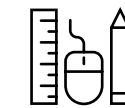
Experiment #2

Two seated-height tables were placed in an open area adjacent to a high-traffic path with little acoustical privacy. One setting also included a large overhead lamp. The setting with the lamp was selected 80% of the time. Researchers hypothesized the lamp created a spatial boundary that provided territorial privacy and made people feel more protected.



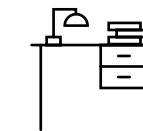
Six Key Drivers

Similar results were confirmed by a separate study conducted by Steelcase when new shared spaces were added at Little Diversified Architecture's office in Washington D.C. (See pg. 46 for details about this study). These experiments and other research from observation studies, surveys and sensor data identify six key drivers that increase the use of shared spaces:



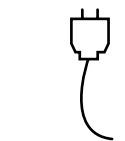
Task-Oriented Amenities

People prefer spaces with amenities similar to those they would find at their primary workstation (i.e. appropriate seating that supports a range of duration, digital displays, power, etc.); yet informal spaces often provide limited posture support.



Working Surfaces

It's important that surface(s) support(s) both work and people's belongings, which few spaces offer.



Access to Power

People are more likely to work in a space where power is available and easily accessible, especially for individual and long-term use; architectural conditions often dictate how easily power can be accommodated and it can often be overlooked. Regardless of estimated duration, power remains a ubiquitous need for workers.



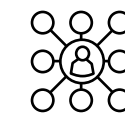
Privacy

We naturally gravitate toward areas that provide some level of privacy; whether it's visual, acoustical or territorial.



Permission

People need to feel that it's okay to adjust the space based on their needs, yet many times it's not an option or feels like it's not acceptable.



Context

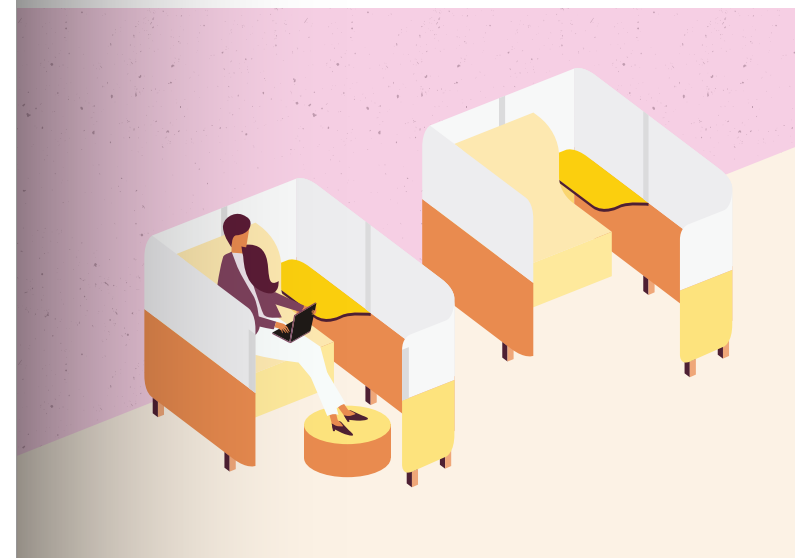
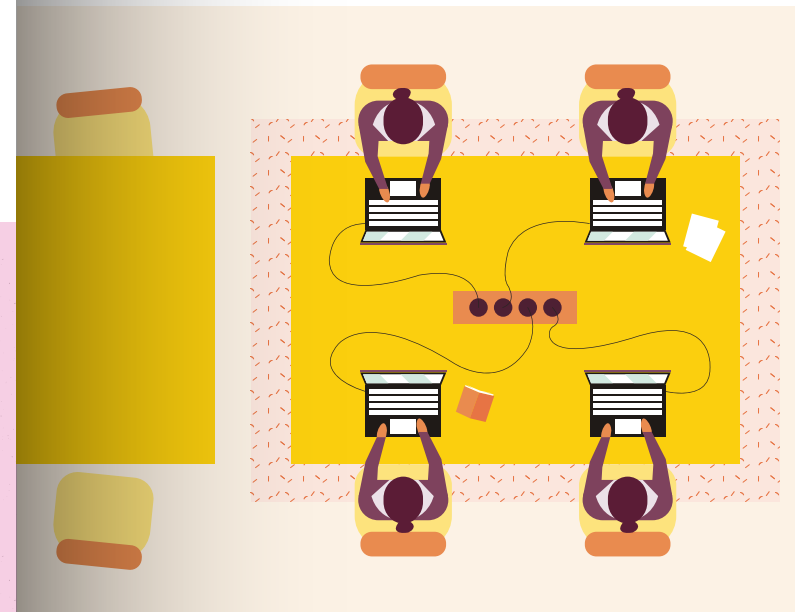
Location often determines use. It's important that shared spaces are in close proximity to people's work zone and colleagues when they need to stay connected. Destination spaces are important when people want to get away and escape.

Experiment #3

Tables were placed in settings with and without access to power. The experiment confirmed people choose tables where power is in easy reach versus tables with no access to power, especially when they are doing individual work for longer periods of time. Power access is less of a factor on seat location for groups and short-term use.

Experiment #4

In settings of side-by-side Brody WorkLounges (one with and one without a footrest), people selected the Brody with the footrest 69% of the time, indicating the desire for more ergonomic support when working in a lounge setting.



Making Work Feel More Comfortable

When it comes to designing shared spaces it's important to think about how these spaces will support all five work modes—focus, socialize, collaborate, learn and rejuvenate. Since people perform different tasks and a range of activities throughout the day, no one space can support them all. But every space needs to help people be more productive.

“You have to design with the intention to help teams and individuals work more productively no matter what they're doing,” explains Roush. “You can't expect teams to effectively collaborate if the space does not provide them with the proper tools or enough privacy. Similarly, if someone needs to get away to rejuvenate, it's hard if the only spaces available to them are busy cafes.”

To be successful, shared spaces also need to create a sense of psychological comfort, where people feel relaxed and at ease. “It's hard to have good social interactions with people if we don't feel safe,” says “Joyful” author and designer Ingrid Fetell Lee. “A lot of office environments have subtle unconscious things that make us feel less safe. Very open offices where people feel exposed can trigger a sense of a lack of safety. ‘Prospect and refuge’ is an idea coined by the British geographer Jay Appleton, and it explained why we like looking at really open landscapes that have little clusters of bushes and trees in them. We love that feeling of being able to see and get a sense of everything that's going on, but we also need refuge. People need to feel protected and have a sense of safety. If we feel like we're an animal in an open field, then that's going to affect our interactions with other people.”



Posture

Do you have access to a range of postures? Seated. Stool Height. Lounging. Perching. Different postures enable different kinds of work to happen more effectively.

Privacy

Acoustical Privacy

Do you have access to private spaces where you can't be heard, when necessary?

Visual Privacy

Can you be seen by others? Can you free yourself from sight-induced distractions?

Territorial Privacy

Can you claim a space and control it as your own?

Informational Privacy

Can you keep content (analog and digital) or a conversation confidential?



Proximity

People-to-People

Are people a comfortable distance from one another?

People-to-Technology + Tools

Do you have easy access to the tools and technology you need to get work done?

Furniture-to-Furniture + Space

Does the furniture work well together? Is the setting located in an area appropriate for the type of work being done?

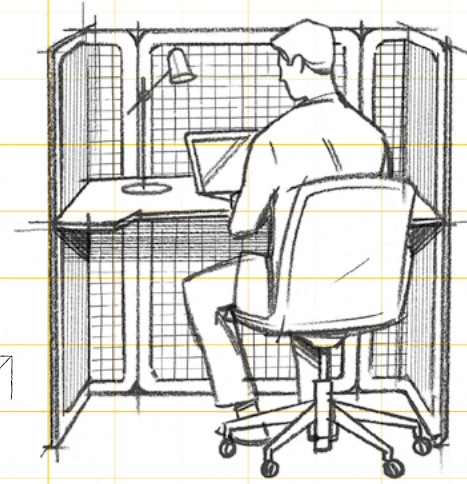


Personality

Does the space help set the tone for your organization's brand and culture?

“You have to design with the intention to help teams and individuals work more productively no matter what they're doing.”

Mary Elaine Roush
Manager, Applications Design, Steelcase

**PROXIMITY**

Personal lighting gives users a sense of control in a shared environment.

POSTURE

A familiar posture with amenities similar to owned workstations allows users to get away for a change of pace.

**PROXIMITY**

Amenities like the 1+1 Mobile Caddy provide users with storage space to keep their tools and personal belongings nearby.

PRIVACY + PERSONALITY

Universal Lockers provide additional privacy for people trying to focus as well as a place to store their belongings.

Privacy

Provide the appropriate levels and types of privacy needed for the work being done

No matter where work happens, workers need to have a sense of security and the right level of privacy appropriate to their work and workstyle. "Privacy isn't always about four walls and a door," explains Roush. "Territorial privacy can be accomplished by a change of flooring and rugs to define boundary and protect workflow. Visual privacy is important to shield and protect the work going on while blocking sightlines that lead to distractions. Acoustics is another dimension of privacy that should be part of your shared spaces ecosystem to support users and groups when the work needs it.

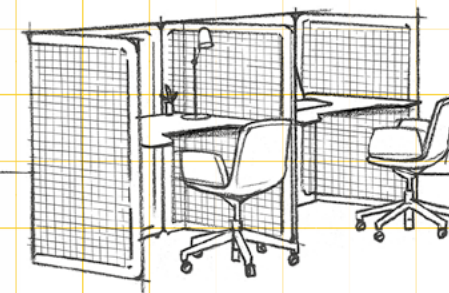
Things to consider:

Is the user's back protected or shielded?

Does the orientation of the seating help the user feel protected?

Does the space allow individual and group information to be shielded from surrounding spaces?

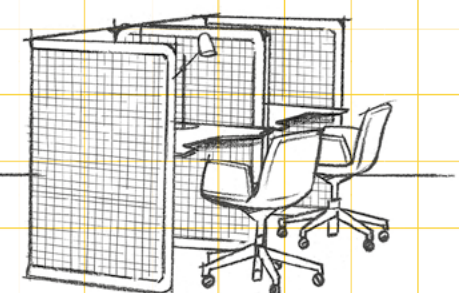
Do the users have access to spaces with acoustic privacy?

BEFORE

How can we give this space more personality and life?

How can we give each user more privacy?

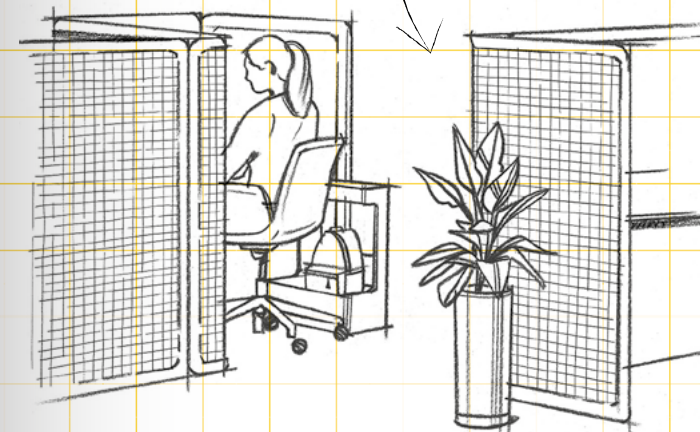
Where would a user put their bag?

**AFTER**

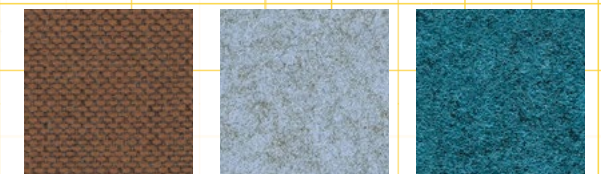
Activated Performance

**PRIVACY + PROXIMITY**

Intentionally plan furniture adjacencies to shield individual users.

**PRO TIP**

Consider establishing a noise protocol in the space to support focus work.



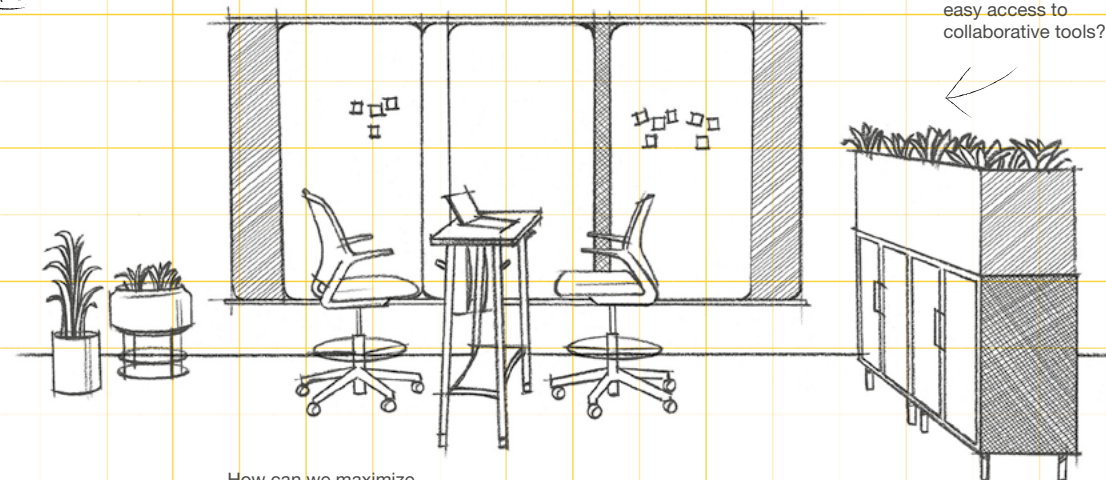


PROXIMITY

Easy access to power and tools ensures the space will work hard, no matter how the furniture is rearranged.

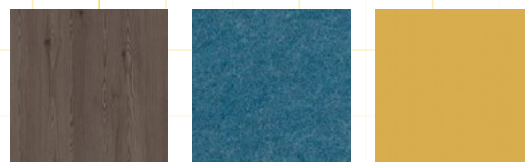


BEFORE



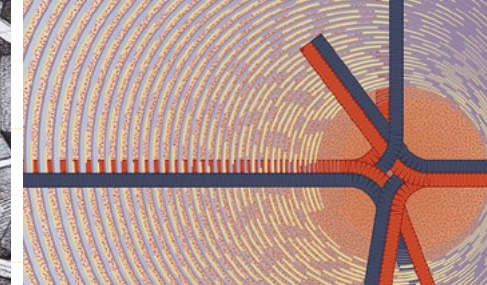
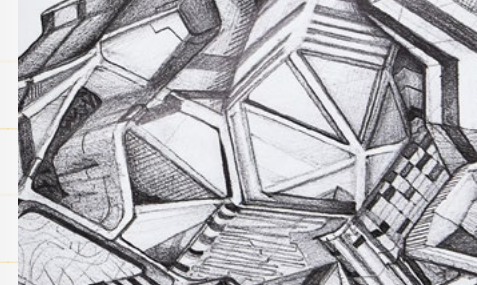
How can users have easy access to collaborative tools?

How can we maximize flexibility to allow users to make the space their own?



AFTER

Activated Performance

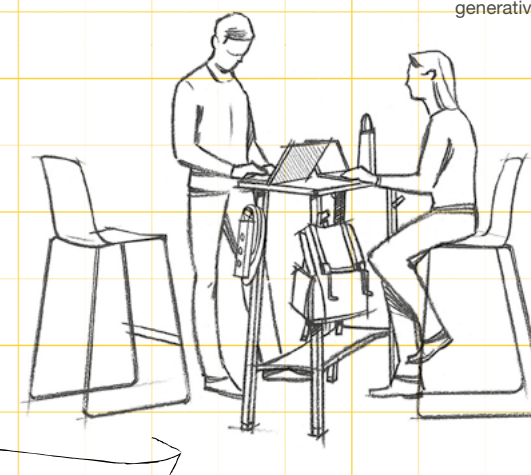


POSTURE

Standing posture promotes an active space that naturally supports generative behavior.

PROXIMITY

Steelcase Flex Slim Table allows everyone to contribute equally and maintain eye contact. It's also a great spot to set your notebook and laptop.



PRIVACY + PROXIMITY

Tack visuals and inspiration on Steelcase Flex Screens, perfect for shielding your space and making content visible.

Posture

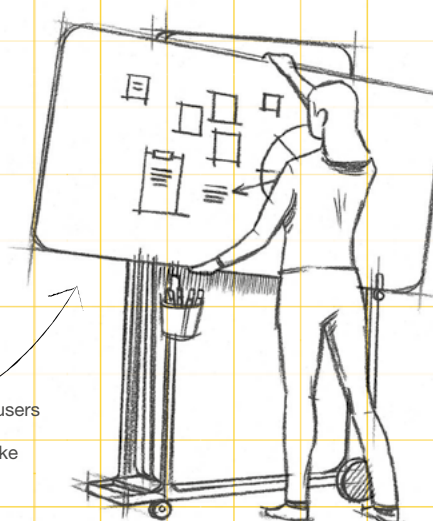
Support the body in a posture appropriate for the task, whether seated, stool-height, lounge or standing

Today, very few people spend all day in the same chair at the same desk. This is a welcome change, reducing the physical stress that affects productivity, health and wellbeing. Different postures enable different kinds of work to happen more effectively. This means you have to provide a range of postures across shared spaces. People are sitting in longer durations away from the desk, making comfort in these spaces even more important.

"If you want to promote specific behaviors in a space, you need to think about what posture can help you do that. For example, if you want to enable a more active style of collaboration consider a space that supports standing postures," explains Roush. "If the space is intended for long term deep focus work, a high performance task chair should be used. Spaces designed for social connections would benefit from a more relaxed posture that lounge seating provides."

PROXIMITY

Flexible furniture gives users the ability to create the space they need and take their content with them.



Things to consider:

Does the seating allow equal participation for all users?

Does the posture promote the behavior you are trying to achieve?

Do you provide a range of postures across your shared spaces?

Proximity

Intentionally plan the relationships between people, their tools, the furniture and the overall space

With so many choices that designers have today, the possibilities for how to design shared spaces is endless but this also makes it more difficult to do well, according to Roush. Greater diligence to addressing proximity issues is required. “You really have to think about the relationship between people in the space, access to the technology and tools they’ll need, how the furniture pieces actually work together and, finally, where the space is located in the overall floorplan to be successful,” says Roush.

“Much like you would host someone in your living room, you need to arrange these spaces so that users feel comfortable and welcome. In order to promote good conversation you have to create a space that allows everyone to participate equally. It should also provide a comfortable distance between people,” says Roush. For example, highly varying seat heights can cause awkward social experiences—a consequence of the growing amount of choice. Seat heights should be consistent to promote comfortable eye contact. It is also equally important to provide the right tools and technology in the space to support the behavior you’re trying to encourage. People need easy access to these tools, which include digital and analog displays to share content or brainstorm.

Another critical factor to designing a space that is functional requires that the furniture works well together. “Much like a task chair needs to be the appropriate height to relate to a desk, this same principal needs to be extended to shared spaces,” says Roush. For example, if a table is in the space and intended to be used in a lounge posture, it’s important that those two objects physically work together if you expect people to be able to get work done. Is the table in the space at an appropriate height relative to the seating so people can use their devices?”

Finally, you must consider where these spaces are located in the overall floor plan. “You can put the same setting in two different places and in one area it works really well and it’s always highly utilized and in the other no one uses it,” says Roush. “And it’s probably because it’s not in the right place. Adjacencies and proximities are really important and you need to plan them thoughtfully, taking into consideration work modes and workflow.”

PROXIMITY

Ensure convenient access to collaborative tools and power to promote equal participation.

PROXIMITY

Hang your bag or coat on a coat rack to keep belongings out of the way, but available when needed.

PROXIMITY

A digital display promotes content sharing.

POSTURE

Self-adjusting comfortable stools provide support for both long and short durations and ease transitions between activities.

Things to consider:

Is the location appropriate for the type of work being done?

Does the setting promote equitable eye contact?

Are people a comfortable distance from one another for the intended activity?

Are tools and technology within reach?

Does the setting support people’s belongings?

Does the furniture work well together from a dimensional standpoint?

Office Remix

37

BEFORE

Will users be comfortable during both long and short meetings?

Will users feel too exposed to socialize their ideas?

Where can these users sketch and pin during the meeting?

AFTER

Activated Performance

PRIVACY

Screens provide shielding for displayed content while offering flexible control.

PROXIMITY

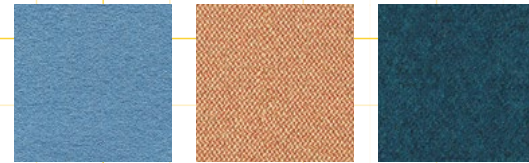
Screens are easily accessible for analog content generation.

BEFORE

Would users feel comfortable socializing ideas here?

How can we give this space more personality?

How can personal devices be supported here?

**AFTER**

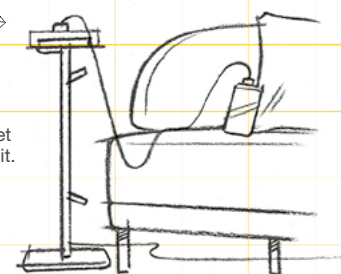
Activated Performance

**PERSONALITY**

Adding a rug can help create a territorial boundary as well as give the space a great vibe.

PROXIMITY

Lightweight and easy to move around, the Steelcase Flex Power Stand allows users to get power where they need it.

**PRIVACY + PERSONALITY**

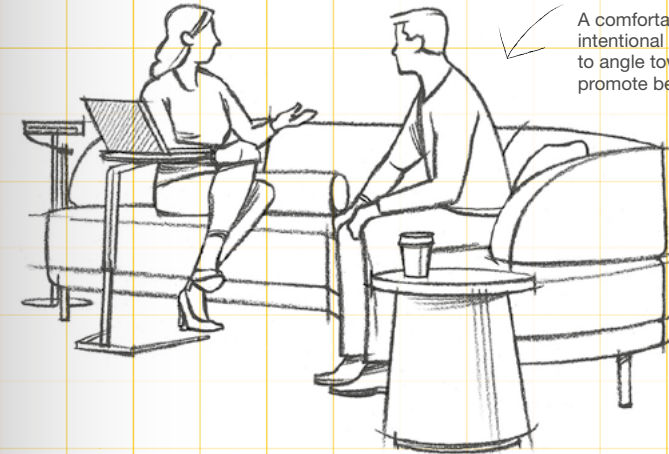
This pendant fixture provides some territorial privacy as well as ambient lighting to help set the tone of the space.

PRIVACY

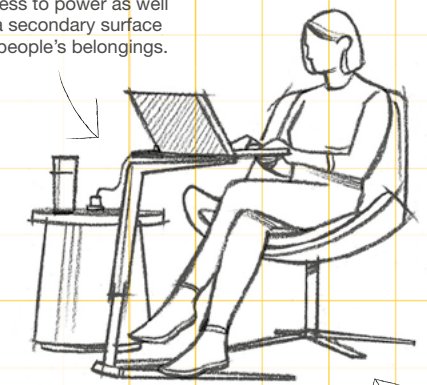
Divisio Acoustic Screens offer great sound absorption as well as visual privacy for people.

**POSTURE + PROXIMITY**

A comfortable lounge with an intentional shape allows guests to angle toward one another to promote better eye contact.

**PROXIMITY**

The small table provides access to power as well as a secondary surface for people's belongings.

**PROXIMITY**

A surface for technology, a place to set your drink and a supportive chair allow users to get work done here.

Personality

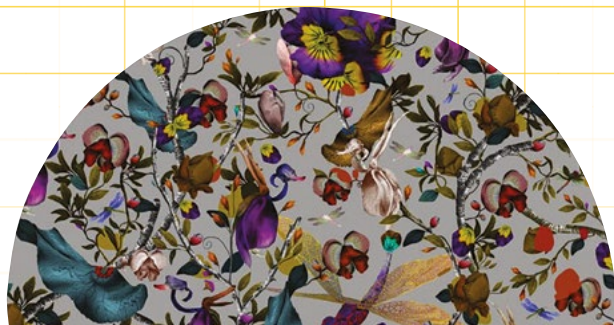
Express the unique brand and culture of an organization to attract and retain talent

"Aesthetics still matter. Personality is how organizations can put their stamp on these spaces and communicate its brand and culture to its employees and visitors. You want to use personality as a tool—position that personality in the right places in the office and combine it with the other principles, and then you're going to really be in the sweet spot of performance," says Roush. Everyone has personal preferences and responds differently so it's also important to offer a range of aesthetic choices to individuals and teams.

Things to consider:

Are you balancing the level of performance with personality appropriate for the organization?

Are you thinking about personality as a tool? i.e. wayfinding or team identity



Think holistically about the relationship between posture, privacy, proximity and personality.

Organizations are trying hard to create the kinds of places where people want to work and where they can get work done. No one wants to invest in a place that looks great but isn't getting used, yet too often leaders look around their offices and wonder why some areas are popular and others sit empty. There is no one size fits all approach, but thinking holistically about the relationship between posture, privacy, proximity and personality will go a long way toward creating places where people feel a sense of psychological safety and can be productive.

Getting It Right

How four companies are successfully using space to accelerate change

Globally, organizations today are facing some hard questions: How do we compete for top talent? How can we accelerate our cultural transformation? How do we help new, hyper-collaborative teams reach their innovative potential?

Learn how four companies answered these questions by rethinking their spaces to help encourage new behaviors, reinforce culture and create an engaging employee experience where people thrive and the organization succeeds.

VodafoneZiggo

In 2016, when Vodafone, a global telecommunications company, merged its Dutch business with Ziggo, the country's largest cable provider, owned by Liberty Global, one of the biggest challenges company leaders faced was internal: joining two very different workplace cultures. While all Vodafone employees, including their leaders, had become highly mobile with unassigned workspaces and the ability to work wherever they wanted, Ziggo relied on assigned work zones in the open plan and a separate floor for its executives.

When two cultures are so different, a merger can be very disruptive. An “us vs. them” dynamic can easily develop, creating tensions that undermine whatever synergies the merger was supposed to achieve. From the onset, VodafoneZiggo leaders wanted to minimize that threat.

Instead of focusing on site rationalization as a necessary routine to achieve economies of scale, leaders understood the vital importance of creating a new central office that would leverage the power of space to successfully blend both companies into a new and vibrant shared culture, creating a destination that would enhance all employees' feelings of belonging and connection.

“We knew that everything we did from the merger onward would need to deal with the ambition we have as one company,” says Roel Polmans, project director. “We wanted to create an office space where you want to be because it's more engaging, it's more productive and it's more enjoyable.”

In-depth workshops at the very beginning of the project and involving a wide range of employees provided essential insights into wants and needs. The overarching goal was to create a human-centered office that conforms to how employees really want to work—not the other way around.

One year later, more than 1,500 VodafoneZiggo employees moved into a stunning, 16,000-square-meter total renovation linking three buildings in the center of Utrecht opposite the central train station. The entire facade is a sculptural metal grid specially shaped to let natural sunlight through the windows behind it while controlling glare. On the ground floor is a bustling shopping center that includes a VodafoneZiggo retail space, visibly reminding employees every day of their connection to customers and brand.

Like the former Vodafone office, this is a free-address, shared work environment. Everyone can choose their best work environment—from enclosed private pods to collaboration spaces to casual lounge settings, depending on their needs and mood.

With so many employees now working together every day, Polmans observes, “we are like our own society.” And, in fact, an urban dynamic of individuality and interdependence is what inspired the design of the new facility, notes Tim Merkenhof, OCS+ workplace

An urban dynamic of individuality and interdependence inspired the design of the new facility.

Coalesce Massaud Lounge

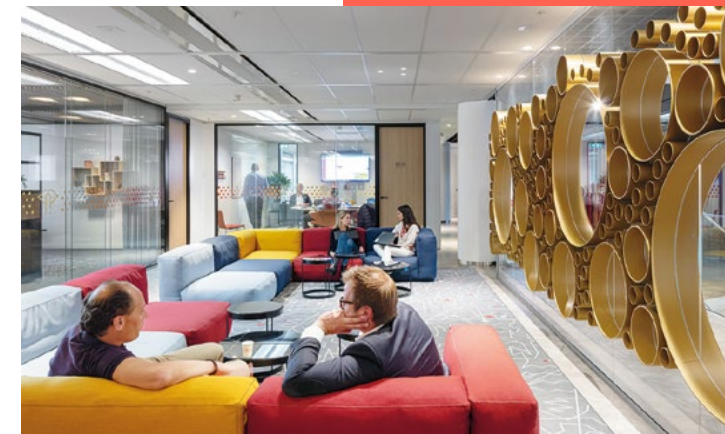


A glass bridge encourages connections between separate buildings and has become one of the most used meeting spaces in the office.

consultant and concept designer. Different zones meet distinctly different needs. Large central areas such as an expansive open stairway and social hubs are lively places for impromptu meetings and spur-of-the-moment chats. “Instead of waiting two weeks for a meeting, you can settle things in two minutes,” notes Polmans. Ringing these centers is a buffer zone that includes amenities such as lockers, printers, coffee bars and large meeting rooms, functioning like transportation systems that route people throughout the building. Farther out are neighborhoods, quieter places for individual and collaborative work, including some “streets” especially designated for agile teams. On the top floor, there's ClubConnect—a place to eat, drink, work together and socialize. Various gaming options make this a place to connect and recharge. ClubConnect also hosts town hall meetings and other employee events.

With bright pops of color and an abundance of textural interest, the vibe of the facility is intentionally welcoming, comfortable and invigorating without being frenetic. Some even describe it as “homey.”

“We wanted to bring office life to the next level, to bring in the vision of our new company, which is, ‘Enjoyment and progress with every connection,’” notes Polmans, quickly adding that achieving that goal goes beyond aesthetics and game rooms. “The most important thing for most people at work is, do they feel at ease? Can they find the proper place to work? Can they find their colleagues? A meeting room? Places to leave their stuff? Get lunch? If all the basics are done right, then people are going to love it.”



Shared lounge spaces throughout the building are perfect for casual conversations and informal meetings with colleagues.



four point eight meeting table
Think Chair

Joyea redefined their workplace by creating distinctive spaces that capture the culture of sharing and the open-door leadership style of the company.

Coalesse LessThanFive Seating

Joyea

Joyea is an industrial automation company, based in the Chinese city of Danyang. A leader in its field of robotics with more than 150 patents and many more in the pipeline, Joyea's evolution from a glass and handicrafts manufacturer to a leading innovator has been rapid and echoes the rapid transformation of the Chinese economy. With technology giants and exciting innovation hubs like Shanghai, Hangzhou and Shenzhen drawing much of the top talent, how does a Danyang-based company of 150 employees become the leader of a \$44 billion domestic market?

Located 200 kilometers from Shanghai and with a population of 890,000, Danyang is a small city by Chinese standards. When Joyea Founder and President Mr. Liping Wu discovered there was a lack of quality childcare for his employees in Danyang, he invested in developing a childcare center. He also introduced Danyang's first Japanese Ramen café, complete with Japanese chefs and ingredients imported from Osaka. He understands the vital connection between community, life and work.



Coalesse Lagunitas Collection

Mr. Wu's view, inspired by Taoist philosophy, centers around the notion that happiness, wellbeing, trust and the opportunity to do meaningful work, together form a culture that sees employees, innovation and business thrive. "Chinese companies that will continue to lead in the future must genuinely care for their people" is how he explains the key to his highly skilled and robust pipeline of talent.

To design a home that would attract new talent as well as continue to inspire its 150 employees, Joyea worked with Steelcase to create a custom-built new campus it called Wisdom Park. Described as a place that promotes a healthy, balanced lifestyle, the campus is an open and supportive environment that fosters innovative teamwork and a thriving community, creating a progressive work environment that underpins a culture of innovation and excellence. The space is designed to foster creative work, independent thinking and communication.

Opened in 2018, the new campus features a range of settings that support both individual focus and collaboration that provide Joyea's employees with a highly attractive and social work environment. Spaces can be easily personalized to elevate an employee's individuality and sense of belonging. Generous sports facilities and spaces for continuous education mean employees are physically well and intellectually stimulated.

The company's attitude to innovation means that employees are encouraged to experiment. In this dynamic, inventive environment, high levels of trust and responsibility rest with each individual. The organization relies on people thriving in their work. Education is paramount to Joyea's philosophy. Employees are encouraged to upskill, pursue development, share knowledge and host exchanges of ideas and perspectives.

Mr. Wu's office is relatively small by Chinese standards and is designed to accommodate many different activities, from focused work and reflection to social interaction and meetings with employees.

Coalesse Lagunitas Lounge
Coalesse Massaud Lounge
Coalesse Sebastopol Table



It was clear that the companies who would take the lead would be those that invested in a holistic comfortable, healthy and rewarding employee experience.

Little

When the Washington, D.C. office of Little Diversified Architectural Consulting, a leading international architecture and design firm, had the chance to expand into a 100 square meters space being vacated next door, leaders realized this was more than just an opportunity to become bigger. It was also a chance to create a better workplace, one that could boost productivity and satisfaction among their team of 40 employees.

“The goal was two-fold,” explains Anh Tran, a senior associate at Little. “We wanted to create more dedi-cated seating for additional employees, but we alsowanted to increase the variety of spaces in our office and support different workstyles, particularly for teamwork and individual focus.”

Like many organizations, Little's existing 620 square meters workplace was mostly open plan. Although employees said it was easy enough to communicate spontaneously and collaborate with coworkers, they also complained about not enough privacy and distractions that made it harder to concentrate. Meeting spaces were large, formal conference rooms. Access to small rooms, focus spaces or informal spaces for impromptu conversations was extremely limited. Little leaders wanted to make use of the square footage they were gaining, as well as reconfigure some under-used existing areas, to create new spaces that would add to the appeal of their workplace and really perform.

Little's goals dovetailed perfectly with ongoing research Steelcase was conducting around the importance of providing a variety of settings as office work rapidly shifts toward more robust collaboration and creative problem-solving. The two organizations decided to work together to further the research. Little's decision to partner with Steelcase resulted in eight new spaces:

Five fully enclosed focus rooms support individual concentration and privacy. Two include height-adjustable desks and seating. Another provides a relaxed work posture. The remaining two are informal lounge settings intended to support private reflection and rejuvenation as well as short-duration tasks.

Three group settings provide for collaboration and socializing away from the workstation. One is furnished with high-top tables and stools, another with booths and the third is a casual living-room-like setting with easy-to-move furniture.

“We intentionally created a variety of spaces to see how people would use them, what they liked and didn't like, and how it changed behaviors,” explains Kristin Boear, a Steelcase applications marketing manager. Tran describes it as “a living lab approach” that reinforced the importance of shared spaces in open plan environments and also yielded some new insights.

Even relatively small steps to incorporate a greater variety of shared spaces reaps significant rewards.

The addition of five focus spaces resulted in a 14% increase in employees' perceptions of their ability to do heads-down work.



One surprise was that the high-top setting designed primarily for informal collaboration was also often used as a destination for individual focus work. The appeal of being able to stand or perch, a large worksurface to spread out materials, an up-close digital display and its getaway location on the floorplan resulted in this being a frequently used, dual-purpose setting.

Similarly, large worksurfaces and other task-oriented amenities have created high demand for the two enclosed focus rooms with height-adjustable desks and seating. “A large part of design work is production that tends to be task-based and individually oriented,” explains Tran. “If you have to lay out a bunch of documents to review you need room to do it, space that has that is automatically a first choice.” The strong influence of adjacencies has been another key discovery. Although these two focus rooms are essentially the same, one is about 10 feet from workstations and the other is directly across from the desk of a principal in the firm. “Both get used, but we see a definite order of preference that verifies the granularity of distance and what hierarchy and adjacency do for utilization,” says Tran.

Post-occupancy survey results confirm that the new spaces are having a positive impact. There's been an overall improvement in employee satisfaction, and metrics for individual workspaces as well as team and group spaces improved by significant margins. Improved satisfaction with privacy was especially strong, jumping from 2.8 on a five-point scale to 3.28 post-project. Employees say it's now easier to collaborate and there was a 14% increase in perceptions of their ability to do heads-down work plus a 19% increase in respondents who said they were able to move throughout the day to different work settings. Other interesting indicators of impact: Headphones dropped 18 percentage points in emp-loyees' post-occupancy ranking of their most-used tools, and interest in working remotely dropped from 54% to 45%.

The gains that Little achieved suggest that even relatively small steps to incorporate a greater variety of shared spaces can reap significant rewards. “It's not like we renovated the entire office in order to do this. Our individual workstations didn't change, so these gains most likely correlate with the provision of the additional spaces as well as employees' improved ability to choose environments suitable to their needs,” notes Tran.

“You really don't need to put in something like a ball pit to make the space and the experience better,” she continues. “We achieved a measurable increase in people's happiness just by generating a couple of strategic intercessions. Especially now when everybody's pushing for any advantage they can get, it's important to know that you don't always have to do some grand, scary change to make the space and the experience appreciably better.”

After adding eight new shared spaces, a post-occupancy study showed improvement in employee satisfaction.

Coalesse Lagunitas Collection



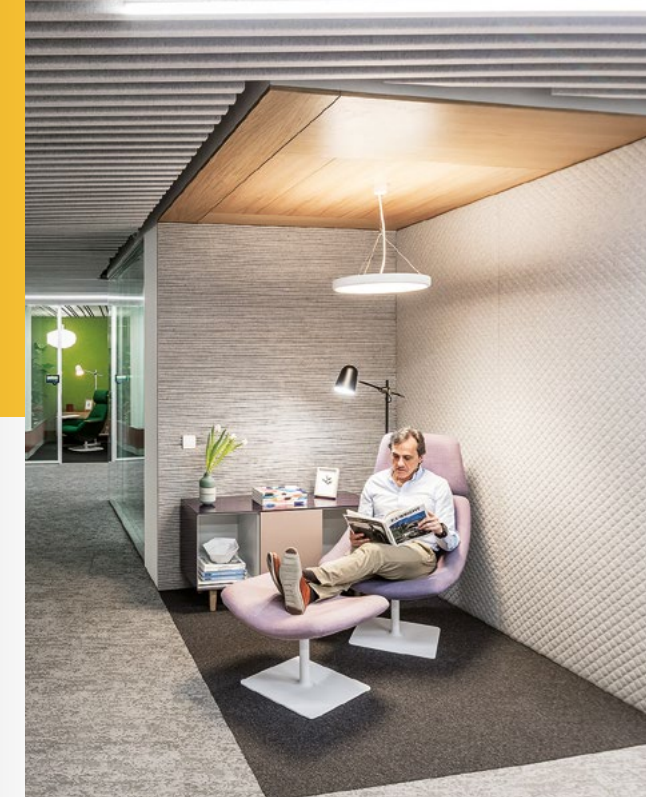
Steelcase Madrid WorkLife Center

Steelcase's newly redesigned Madrid WorkLife Center is a destination for customers as well as a home for 250 Madrid-based employees. The space is intended to help guide clients through the physical and cultural transformation required to meet today's rapid push for innovation. It is also designed to help Steelcase shift its own culture to meet the evolving needs of work today.

"The world is changing so fast," says Alejandro Pociña, president, Steelcase Spain & Portugal. "If you don't shake things up from time to time, you're not going to be able to keep up." And, so to keep up and lead by example, the design team set out to design an improved employee experience that reinforces new behaviors and a more agile work culture.

The new space breaks down functional silos and has drawn leaders out of their private offices, promoting cross-departmental collaboration and the open

Coalesse Montara650 Stools
Coalesse Montara650 Rocker
Umami Lounge System



The Steelcase Madrid WorkLife Center provides employees with a collection of diverse settings that meet the needs of all work modes.

The space serves as a laboratory for customers to test and experience new ways of work firsthand.



Plants, wood grain and natural light integrate biophilia throughout the space.

exchange of ideas. In line with the overall goal of cross-pollination, the in-house project team was made up of a multidisciplinary group of people that applied a human-centered approach throughout the process. The team began by identifying clear objectives to help them shift from thinking in processes to projects:

Collaboration & Innovation—key to the project, leaders wanted to foster a collaborative culture that encourages innovation.

Agility & Efficiency—to address the rapidly-changing market, the team wanted to adopt agile practices and improve efficiency.

Customer Focus—to increase customer focus, leaders sought to empower every employee to feel part of the sales process.

Employee Experience—to drive engagement, the team focused on improving the employee experience and creating an environment that nurtures physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing.

The Steelcase Madrid WorkLife provides employees with a collection of diverse settings that meet the needs of all work modes. A variety of colors, patterns and materials creates an authentic and engaging employee and customer experience. Department hubs have been replaced with a hot-desking policy, where no one has an assigned desk. Employees were also untethered from desks with mobile technology, giving them more choice and control over how and where they work. Existing processes were audited while the team focused on creating a culture where a more agile style of teamwork can thrive — improving speed, flexibility and customer focus.

As Gonzalo Lorenzo, director of sales for Steelcase Spain & Portugal describes, "We've created a space where clients and employees are at the center. It serves as a laboratory for them to test and experience new ways of work firsthand. Now, the office and showroom is a laboratory where employees can rapidly prototype ideas and customers can find inspiration for the future."

Tech Talent Beacon

How data-driven tools helped put a company's culture change into hyperdrive

Walk down Boston's Seaport Boulevard and you'll see a mecca for young professionals. Redeveloped in 2010 to attract innovators, the Seaport now hosts leaders in tech, biopharmaceuticals and finance—all fighting for the more than 150,000 students who call Boston home each year. With a dramatically low unemployment rate of 2.9%, Boston is a microcosm of what organizations face everywhere—the need to find and keep great people.

High-tech innovative software development company PTC makes engineering product management software for manufacturers. As leaders looked toward their next phase, they wanted to compete aggressively for the highly-skilled talent around them. Their previous headquarters in Needham, Mass., 45 minutes outside of Boston, was not attracting prospective candidates. They didn't want to leave the city or deal with the commute.

The company also saw that people working in traditional cubicles had kept them siloed, stifling creativity, collaboration and, ultimately, innovation. As part of a push called PTC 2020, the company sought a more collaborative, flexible, open, fast-paced and innovative culture. They decided to leverage a move to the Seaport as a large step toward transformation, igniting collaboration and fueling innovation. PTC also moved from all private offices and owned workstations to a 100% free address workplace. Even the CEO gave up his assigned desk.

"When we first talked to people about it, the sky was falling," says John Civello, VP of real estate and workplace. "The open plan has a bad reputation. We were fighting against the fact that some companies haven't done it in the most thoughtful way. So, we tried to be very purposeful. Now, when you ask people, they would never go back. Real estate put our goals to change our culture into hyperdrive."

Not all products and Smart + Connected solutions are available globally



A Big Move

The company moved from 30,000 square meters in the suburbs to 18,500 across seven floors in the tower that bears its name in Boston. PTC needed new tools to manage the experience for its people to succeed in shifting its culture while implementing a new mobile work strategy in a high-cost location:

New space management tools—Real estate managers had been “flying blind” when it came to space usage. Interns would count people periodically. With a tighter footprint, PTC needed to know how space was being used to make quick changes when necessary.

New wayfinding tools—PTC’s previous space didn’t have any way to identify if a room was booked or for people to find places to meet. With a new space and a new workplace strategy, employees needed help to identify available spaces.

New collaboration tools—PTC wanted less scheduled, time-consuming meetings and more on-demand, quick problem-solving conversations. They needed easily-accessible collaboration tools, as well as on-demand room scheduling devices.

PTC worked with Margulies Perruzzi Architects to design the seven floors in their new headquarters. Steelcase and Steelcase dealer Red Thread helped them implement a holistic solution which included both furniture and technology. By integrating Steelcase’s Smart + Connected tools, PTC was able to leverage data and technology to support space management, wayfinding and collaboration.

Just like the diverse areas that make up the city of Boston, the new space was designed with distinct “districts” on each floor to accommodate all the different kinds of work. Team neighborhoods included 750 workstations for 1000 employees while cafés, informal lounges called “hives” and private enclaves gave people other ways to connect, feel a sense of community or find some focus time.

“It’s amazingly powerful. My whole career in corporate real estate, we’re always guessing. With this data, we have it in real time and can analyze it and run reports. It lets us have very different conversations.”

John Civallo
VP Real Estate & Workplace, PTC

Informal lounges called “hives” and private enclaves give people ways to connect, feel a sense of community or find some focus time.

Navigating Change

PTC spent 18 months preparing people for the move. They subsidized public transportation for commuters and created a mock-up free address space people could try out. When they moved in January 2019, a suite of integrated technology solutions helped employees and leaders navigate their new home.

Each floor hosts two Steelcase Live Map displays where people can reference a monitor to see in real time which spaces are available. With more than 150 RoomWizard scheduling devices throughout the space, people can book rooms on demand and easily scan nearby rooms to see what’s available based on red and green lights. The tools are intuitive and simple to use.

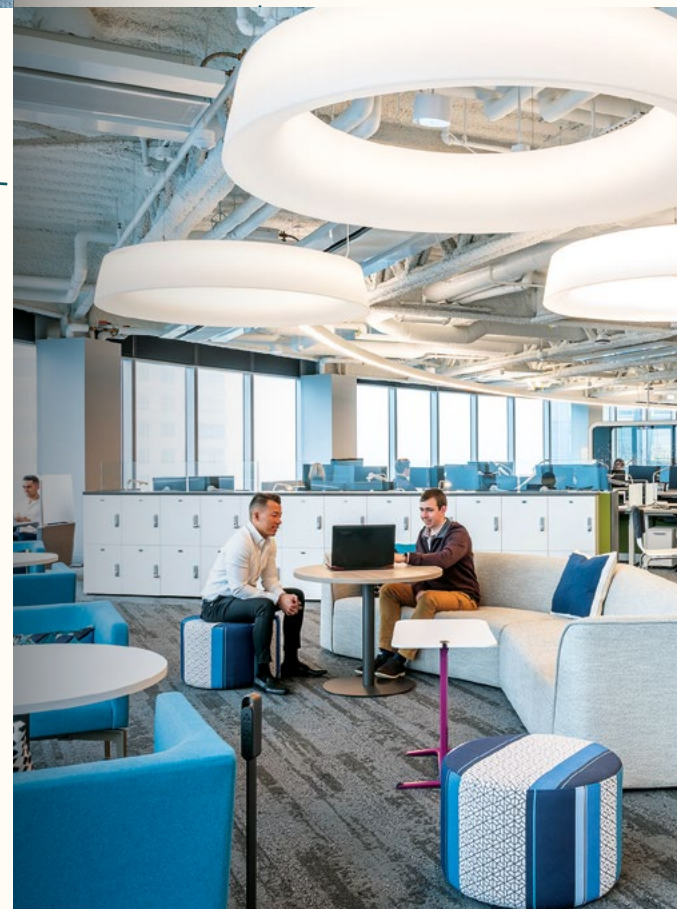
Tom Salvoni, director of infrastructure and architecture, says he uses the Steelcase Find app everyday. “I can go directly to my iPhone and book a room as I’m wandering around. If I need to have an impromptu meeting or schedule something quickly, I can just go on this device and book a room instantaneously,” he says.

More than 1,400 Steelcase Workplace Advisor sensors feed an easy-to-use dashboard Civallo’s team checks daily. “It’s amazingly powerful. My whole career in corporate real estate, we’re always guessing. We’re always trying to figure out the real capacity and occupancy of a space,” Civallo says. “With this data, we have it in real time and can analyze it and run reports. It lets us have very different conversations.” Now, when people let Civallo’s team know they need something to change, he can check the data and enter into the discussion with a more complete picture of what’s going on.

An Integrated and Secure Solution

The data from Workplace Advisor feeds Steelcase Live Map, Steelcase Find app and RoomWizard to offer a seamless user experience. Being a leading tech company, PTC understands the importance of that better than most. “If the selected technology had a lot of different functions and features, it would feel very disjointed to our employees. It was important for us to have an integrated suite of tools to give us a single way to present to employees how to interact with the space,” says Abbas Faiq, chief information officer.

Faiq also highlighted his confidence in the security of the tools and data. “We did our due diligence. I had my security team look at different aspects of data management, personal information, how it was going to be stored, who had control over it and who had access,” says Faiq. “We’re confident in how robust the security is—there’s nothing more important to us.”



Turning Insights into Action

Seven months into move-in, PTC employees are settled into their new space. “We’ve gone from people saying, ‘An open office environment won’t work for me,’ to really enjoying the space,” says Diane Young, VP of global benefits and HR programs. “Employees feel more empowered to connect with their teams and leaders.”

The data delivered by Workplace Advisor has already helped the real estate and facilities team make better use of the space. In one instance, a team said they didn’t have enough space. But, data showed people were just leaving belongings at their desks. By helping to adjust behaviors, the issue was easily resolved. In another case, a concern about not enough meeting space turned out to be “phantom meetings.” Data showed people booked spaces, but didn’t use them. New Workplace Advisor features allow for Auto Book and Auto Release. If a room isn’t in use, it will automatically release it after a period of time. And, if you walk into a space, it will book it for you.

“We feel like it’s been success all across the board. We’ve done two pulse surveys with employees and the feed-back has been great. People love the openness and natural light,” says Civello. “We know we have a higher close rate with prospective hires. And, the feedback from our customers who use our space is fantastic. All of these feedback loops reinforce our strategy. I’m a big advocate of expanding what we’ve seen here in Boston globally.”



With easily-accessible collaboration tools, as well as on-demand room scheduling devices such as RoomWizard, PTC employees can have more spontaneous, quick problem-solving conversations.

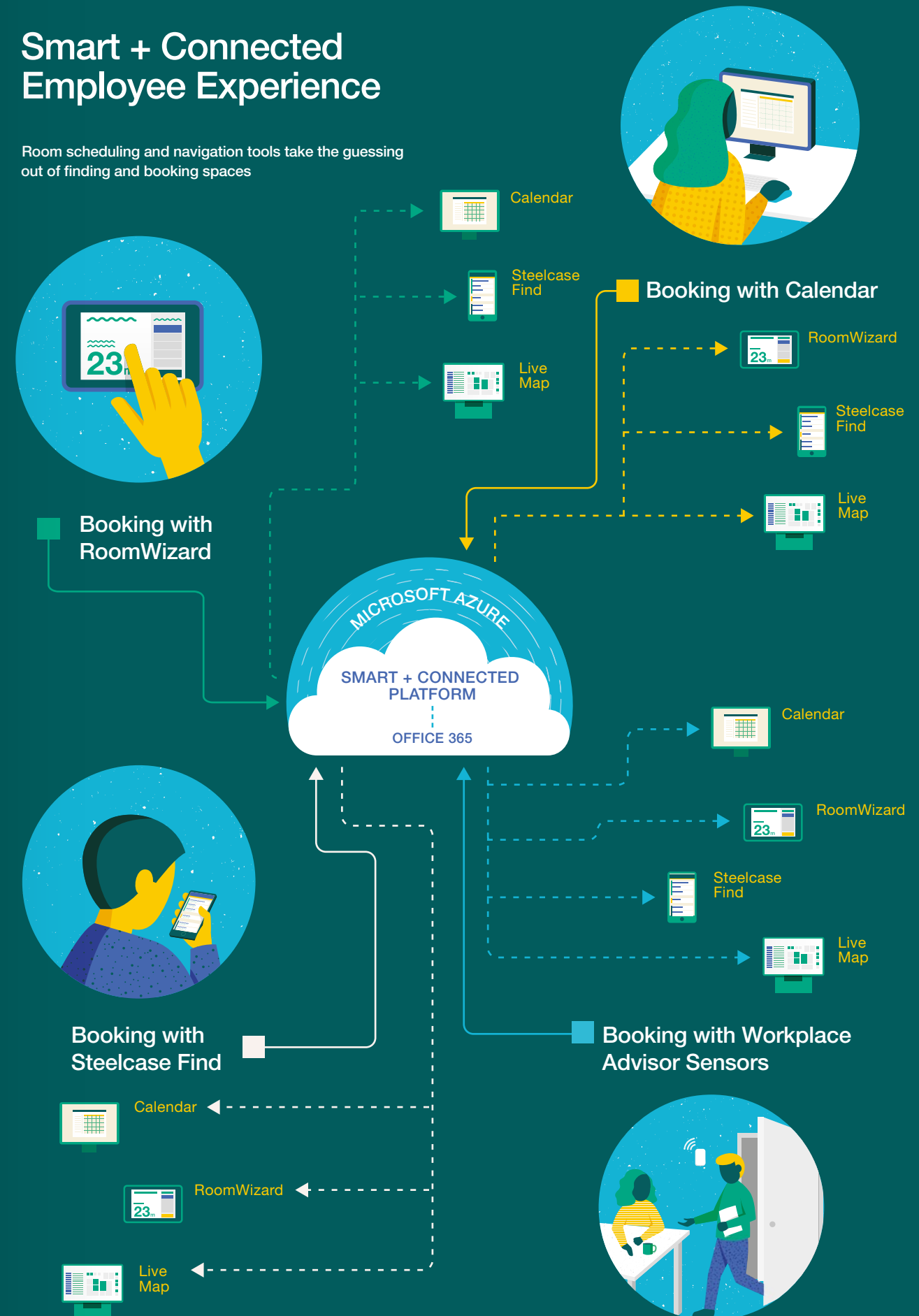
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Each floor hosts two Live Map displays where people can reference a monitor to see in real time which spaces are available.



Smart + Connected Employee Experience

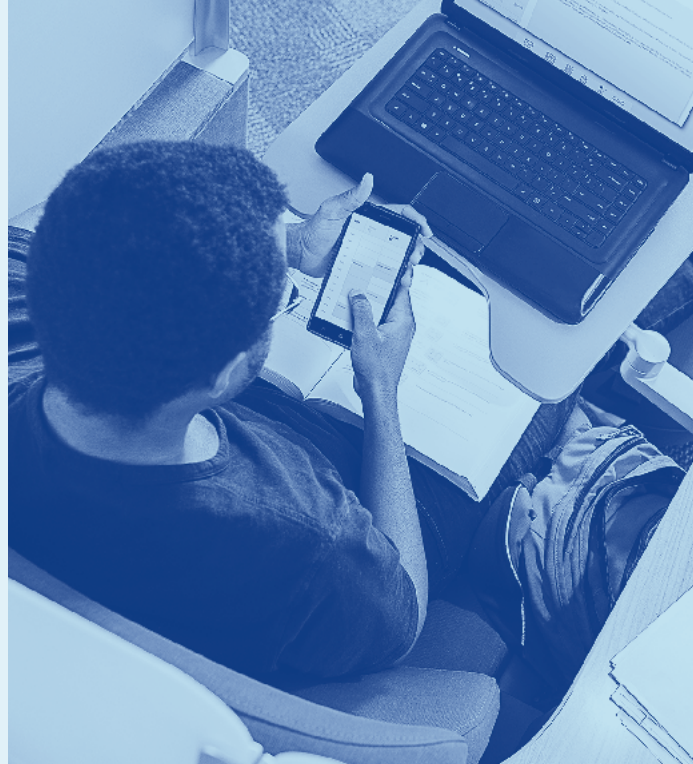
Room scheduling and navigation tools take the guessing out of finding and booking spaces





Finding Focus

Research proves that visual privacy
in the open plan helps people stay focused



A new Steelcase study, conducted in consultation with the University of Wisconsin–Madison found that providing cocoons of visual privacy was enough to help people focus within noisy open offices.

News outlets worldwide pan the open office, claiming that it's stressing us out with too much distraction and too little privacy. The data tells a slightly different story—providing more areas of visual privacy can mitigate some of the distractions that frustrate people at work. When organizations balance the needs of individuals with the needs of teams, the open plan can be an environment where everyone thrives.

When organizations balance the needs of individuals with the needs of teams, the open plan can be an environment where everyone thrives.

The Research Study

To take a deeper look into the open plan's effect on work performance, Steelcase WorkSpace Futures Manager Caroline Kelly led a study measuring sustained attention—a core component of any work process, signaling engagement and focus.

Kelly consulted with the Center for Healthy Minds (CHM) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison—a global leader in scientific research on the brain and emotions. Dr. Richard Davidson, CHM's founder and director as well as author of “The Emotional Life of the Brain” was intrigued with studying the relationship between the physical environment and wellbeing. Elena Patsenko, a research scientist at the center, was tasked with helping to conceptualize the study with Kelly and acted as an expert guide throughout the process.

Almost 70 study participants completed the Sustained Attention Response Task (SART), a test widely used to measure how well people can maintain their focus amidst distractions. By completing a “Go/No-Go” task—which asks participants to press or not press a button, based on a specific cue—researchers can evaluate the participants' ability to focus based on their response times, error rate and time between errors.

Participants were studied in two open-plan settings:

A shared bench with no boundaries

A Brody WorkLounge (an individual work environment with a wrap-around screen that provides shielding)

Each participant was tested at both the bench and the Brody, limiting variables that could affect results. To simulate an authentic office setting, two participants sat diagonally across from each other at the bench and typical open office noise played in the background.



The Results

The results showed that providing visual privacy in a setting like Brody helps people concentrate significantly better than sitting in completely open areas.

While seated in Brody, participants had significantly slower response times compared to those seated at the bench—which is actually a good thing. Slower response times indicate concentration, focus and engagement. They also made fewer errors and had less variation between their response times, indicating a consistent state of focus.

While it may sound counterintuitive that slower response times are better, Patsenko explains why. “Increased reaction times are usually indicative of the participants slipping into automatic or mindless responding, without taking time to process or identify the stimulus.” She also notes that increased reaction times are associated with higher error rates, mind wandering and distraction.



Providing visual privacy in the open plan helps people concentrate significantly better than sitting in completely open areas.



Brains Get Tired

People say they struggle to focus in today's open-plan workplace and neuroscience explains why. Studies show the human prefrontal cortex, where most knowledge work takes place, is energy-hungry and very easily distracted. Humans are able to give controlled, full attention to just one thing at a time. Without options for privacy in the open plan, workers are caught in a crossfire of distractions, adding extra cognitive load on top of the work they are doing. As the ability to focus wanes and cognitive load increases, automatic decision-making rises and quality thinking suffers.

In addition, we're a communal species and our human nature enforces a desire to be accepted and valued by our tribe, which amplifies distractions. To achieve social acceptance from our peers, we continuously monitor our behavior and appearance in front of others to make sure it's in line with cultural norms and values. Controlling one's behavior all day is distracting and takes energy, leaving workers feeling depleted after being on display during a stressful day of work.

“We don’t need to say goodbye to the open plan or benching. We just need to equip it differently.”

Caroline Kelly
Steelcase WorkSpace Futures Manager



Designing the Open Plan

When people complain about the open plan, they often talk about noise and distracting conversations. Some assume that acoustical privacy is the only solution, but the results of the study show workers can achieve focus in the open plan without it. When in the Brody, participants were able to improve their ability to concentrate and stay engaged when given more visual and territorial privacy. By designing the open plan with a range of privacy options, workers can find the space that best suits them and the task at hand.

Does this mean benches should go away in the office? Not so fast. Open areas provide a different set of benefits: Broad vistas, high ceilings and long views provide us with different physical perspectives, which can prime our brains to make new connections and see things in new ways. The study also found that participants were significantly more creative while seated at the bench. Using the Remote Associates Test, participants were given one minute to come up with an additional word that shared something in common with three others on a list. When at the bench, people generated more correct answers, indicating they could connect the words quicker in more abstract ways.

Research suggests that having decreased focus can actually improve our ability to be more divergent and creative in problem-solving,” explains Kelly. “Sitting at a bench with your teammates may be just the right place to tackle a problem together. Other times, when we need to focus, spaces that offer shielding or visual privacy are best.”

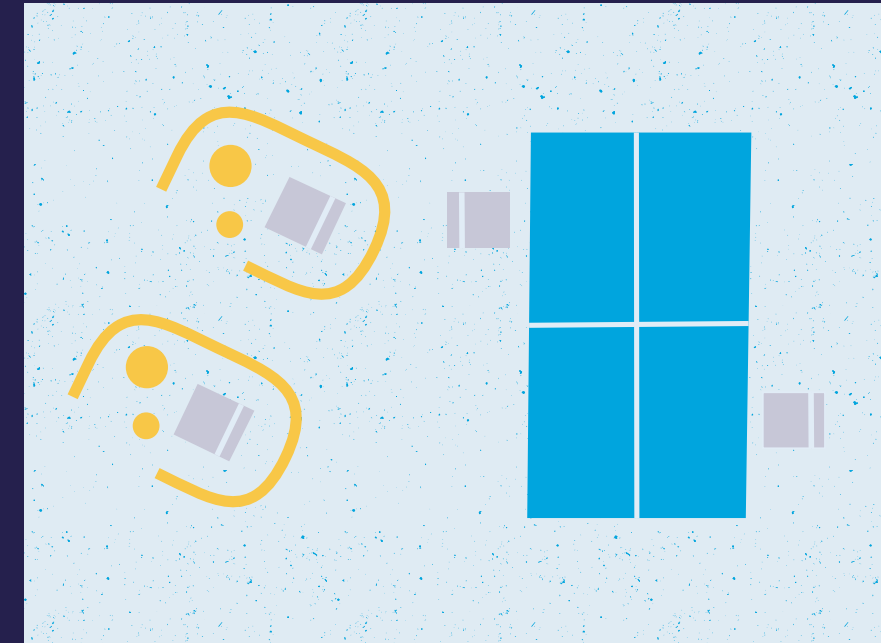
Support the Me Within We

The solution is to offer people a diverse range of spaces, with varying levels of privacy from which to choose the best place for the type of work they need to do. This means designing spaces that balance the need for “me” within “we”—supporting individual focused work as well as team-based collaborative work. It seems simple, yet the design challenge is often about getting the distance right between areas for focus and areas for interaction: too close and the group can distract the individual, but too far away and people don’t seek out the areas they need for concentration.

Every individual has basic needs for privacy and focus. Time alone is as crucial to the creative process as time with others. Workers need spaces where they can decompress, recharge and dive deep into work before resurfacing and collaborating with the team again.

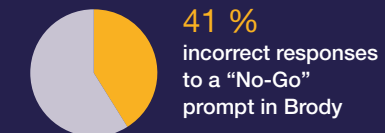
“We don’t need to say goodbye to the open plan or benching,” Kelly explains. “We just need to equip it differently. Pockets of privacy created through shared spaces and furniture like Brody can transform existing floorplans from places of distraction to comfortable havens for employees to collaborate and focus in harmony.”

The Study Environment: Two Open-Plan Settings



Focus Test

When completing the SART, participants made significantly more mistakes responding to “No-Go” prompts at the bench setting than in the Brody setting, suggesting participants working in Brody could sustain attention with greater ease.



Creative Test

Participants were additionally tested on their creative aptitude in a Remote Associates Test. The study found that participants experienced a statistically significant increase in correct responses when working at the bench.



Thinking Outside (and Inside) the Box

How innovative furniture maker Orangebox led the way to work beyond the desk

It was the summer of 2002—six years after IBM's Simon Personal Communicator, the first smartphone, debuted—when Orangebox was born in the village of Hengoed, South Wales, U.K., far away from the disruption occurring in places like Silicon Valley where emerging ways of work were happening. It was the same year Blackberrys were hitting the market but five years before the Apple iPhone ushered in new levels of mobility at work. Yet Orangebox, a new maker of furnishings for the workplace, began to see signals of a major shift in the office—as technology offered the promise of greater freedom, people wanted alternatives to working at their desk.

Long before laptop sales exceeded the sales of desktops, the team at Orangebox had a vision of where work was heading. “Technology was starting to have an enormous impact on how people worked,” says Mino Vernaschi, co-founder and managing director of Orangebox, which recently became a Steelcase company. “Work was quickly migrating away from the desk—and the workplace needed to respond to that fundamental shift. People needed the freedom to work where and how they wanted.”

Orangebox was among the first furniture companies to recognize this shift and respond with innovative non-traditional workplace solutions. At a time when so many companies were still focused on the traditional workstation, Vernaschi's team viewed the workplace through a different lens. Informed by their own research and on-the-ground user feedback, Orangebox was a pioneer in understanding the “away from the desk” movement and recognizing the importance of offering alternative spaces that provide an informal sensibility and are also highly conducive to getting work done.



Orangebox Air³ Pod and Table
Orangebox Eva Chair

“We see our job as bringing people—not furniture—together.”

Mino Vernaschi
Orangebox Co-Founder & Managing Director

“Office Wars and the Corridor Warrior”—showed that a workplace with only dedicated workstations in the open plan could not support people’s need to balance collaboration and individual focus.

“We saw people resorting to taking phone calls in hallways. The rise of teamwork was also forcing people to use their desks as spontaneous meeting areas as they spent more and more time collaborating informally. And new generations entered the workplace with new attitudes and expectations,” explains Vernaschi. These new demands require a new approach to workplace design.”

Recognizing the importance of what urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg called The Third Place—cafés and casual spaces where employees can sip coffee, grab a bite and connect with others in a relaxed, informal environment—they started to think about how to bring that vibe to the workplace and design work environments that make people feel good as well as help them be productive.

“We wanted to help people get real work done away from their desks,” says Vernaschi. “We worked on defining a new bandwidth of furniture that helped them choose where they wanted to work.” The result: Orangebox set out to create movable, adaptable and scalable furniture that could meet people’s needs in these third spaces.

The Corridor Warrior research and others that followed informed what became Orangebox’s product portfolio: flexible, modular solutions for breakout areas, meeting rooms, cafés, lounges, receptions and lobbies. Determined to create both beautiful and high-performing spaces, these products are designed to help people get real work done in non-traditional work settings—a concept they later dubbed Smartworking™, a summation of their philosophy about work and the workplace.



Above
Orangebox Lossit Collection
Orangebox Avi Collection

Left
Orangebox Lossit Collection

“Orangebox and Steelcase have been speaking the same language for years,” says Allan Smith, vice president, global marketing at Steelcase. “We saw how the team approached the changing workplace landscape and their early recognition of how people were migrating away from the traditional workstation—it was a natural fit with Steelcase. They understood people’s need for balance between privacy and the shift toward increased collaboration. We are really excited about bringing our portfolios together.”

The Corridor Warrior

As people increasingly need to toggle between collaboration and focus work within the office, Orangebox’s solutions have continued to stay ahead of the rapidly changing landscape since 2002.

“Our products enable organizations to work in new, more collaborative ways and can help transform both the culture and efficiency of the organization,” says Vernaschi. “We see our job as bringing people—not furniture—together.”

In its first research project the team set out to understand why people were wandering around away from their primary workstations and what they were searching for. They observed people desperately seeking alternative places to work. Their report—



Left
Orangebox Air³ Pod
Orangebox Coze Collection

Below
Orangebox Coze Collection



“For the best part of two decades, our research and development has been focused on Smartworking, which is both a cultural way of thinking and a fresh approach towards what today’s workplace furniture can and should be,” says Creative Director Gerry Taylor. “It focuses on the needs of teams and on creating new furniture archetypes and products capable of delivering the flexible collaborative tools and ways of working demanded by today’s workplace. Our products not only facilitate spontaneous, fluid team working, and more nuanced and easier collaboration, but also focused, individual tasks requiring isolation, quiet reflection and concentrated effort. This makes the open-plan, shared workplace a more effective, enjoyable and productive space for everyone.”

To meet these new needs, Orangebox developed products like their Away from the Desk collection, a lounge system with a firm sit that supports an upright posture—a substantial and credible alternative to desk-based work. The Active Working collection includes items such as personal pods, seating and media tables that enable people to move quickly from one activity to another.

“We wanted to help people get real work done away from their desks by defining a new bandwidth of furniture that helped them choose where they wanted to work.”

Mino Vernaschi
Orangebox Co-Founder & Managing Director

Right
Orangebox Acorn Chair

Below
Orangebox Coze Collection
Orangebox Lapwing



Humble Beginnings

Orangebox co-founders Pete Hurley, Mino Vernaschi and Remo Vernaschi had a vision. They knew the small chair manufacturer they bought in 2002 in the village of Hengoed, South Wales, could do more. And to be successful it needed to do more—in a market saturated with great companies (some local, some global)—they knew they needed to think differently about work and set their focus on innovation.

Their intuition that in a dynamic, highly skilled community such as Hengoed a

great furniture maker could be created and grow to become a globally-recognized innovation brand has been realized.

With a workforce now numbering more than 450, the founders all agree that their most important achievement has been in sustaining a highly committed workforce, each of whom values the success of Orangebox as highly as they do themselves. In fact, it's now common to have multiple generations of the same family working at Orangebox, demonstrating a strongly committed and loyal workforce.



Orangebox Co-Founders
Pete Hurley, Remo Vernaschi
and Mino Vernaschi

The Pod Revolution

Orangebox has also been among the first to respond with innovative solutions to address the need for privacy in the open plan. As organizations embraced the open plan, Orangebox recognized its benefits—and downsides. They knew the open plan was good at bringing people together, increasing collaboration and propelling the cross-pollination of ideas, but they also understood the impact it was having on people’s ability to focus. As complaints of noise and distractions were quickly escalating, Orangebox introduced a groundbreaking solution: acoustic office pods.

The Air office pod gave teams the privacy they needed for collaboration, but also served as a quiet place for individuals. These flexible, scalable and adaptable pods were an easy and inexpensive way to offer people more choice around the types of spaces available to them in the workplace.

A Culture of Innovation

Today, innovation remains at the core of Orangebox’s DNA. The team continues to regularly observe how people work, trying to understand future trends and responding with solutions that help people be their best at work.

“The success of Orangebox is powered by keeping up with the changes happening at work and understanding their impact on people,” says Taylor. “This is what fuels our continuous cycle of product innovation and gives us clarity around what we do and what we stand for.”



Orangebox Air³ pods are easy-to-install, reconfigurable, modular rooms that can act as a freestanding meeting room, private space, phone booth or touchdown room. The innovative louvered roofs automatically close when entering the pod and open after exiting or in the case of fire, eliminating the need for a separate air circulation or sprinkler system.

Flashback

“A flying office to be used for the transaction of business while en route from city to city has been built at the Stout Metal Airplane Division of the Ford Motor Company for the use of Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh and Major Thomas G. Lanphier.”

Ford News, Volume VIII
Number 26, December 1, 1928

The Flying Office

After American Aviator Charles Lindbergh completed the first ever solo, non-stop transatlantic flight from Long Island, New York to Paris, France in 1927, the Metal Office Furniture Company (Steelcase today) made and installed a custom-built desk aboard the plane he used for his publicity tour. The desk gave visiting reporters a place to work on the move and exemplifies Steelcase's commitment to supporting work wherever it happens, whether in the office or thousands of feet above it.

Images from the Collections
of The Henry Ford



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